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MR. HENRY IRVING AND MISS ELLEN TERRY AS DR.
PRIMROSE AND OLIVIA IN "OLIVIA."

THE THEATRE ANNUAL

1886

EDITED BY
CLEMENT SCOTT.

CONTAINING
Stories, Reminiscences and Verses

BY

Wilson Barrett

William Beatty-Kingston

E. L. Blanchard

Austin Brereton

H. Savile Clarke

Samuel K. Cowan, M.A.

Frank A. Marshall

Henry Pettitt

Clement Scott

George R. Sims

Bram Stoker

J. L. Toole

AND

Chas. Wyndham

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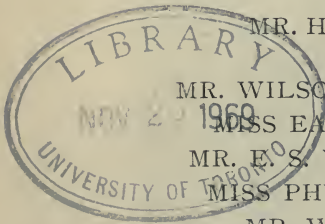
1886.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.



MR. HENRY IRVING and MISS ELLEN TERRY,
as Dr. Primrose and Olivia, in "Olivia."
MR. WILSON BARRETT, as Jack Yeulett, in "Hoodman Blind."
MISS EASTLAKE, as Nance Yeulett, in "Hoodman Blind."
MR. E. S. WILLARD, as Mark Lezzard, in "Hoodman Blind."
MISS PHYLLIS BROUGHTON, as Olinska, in "Mazeppa."
MR. WM. TERRISS, as Squire Thornhill, in "Olivia."
MISS KATE RORKE, as Lucy Preston, in "The Silver Shield."
MISS VIOLET CAMERON, as Squire Thornhill, in "The Vicar of
Wideawakefield."

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THE THEATRE ANNUAL.

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Harlequin's Last Leap.

BY WILSON BARRETT.

IT is Boxing-Day, and in London snow has fallen during the night, and lies crisp and white in the streets, on the trees and the houses. The sun is shining, but gives no warmth ; it is bitterly cold ; a keen, cutting north-east wind is blowing, penetrating with a steely sharpness the warmest clothing, and swirling round the street corners with a biting force, that sends a shiver through the whole of the body. The pedestrians hurry over the crossings, and seek gladly the shelter of the houses ; but the cold wind is everywhere, and, dodge as they may, it follows and meets them—is at once, in front, behind, and all about them, sending little showers of snow from the housetops and the trees, whistling down the chimneys, through the cracks of the window-panes, and under the doors. A wind that will have its way, and is not to be shut out. Those who have fires gather round them ; those who have not, shiver, and beat their hands and bodies, vainly endeavouring to send the sluggish blood more quickly through the veins. Out in the streets the thinly-clad look blue and pinched as they shudderingly draw their scanty clothing tighter about them. But it is Boxing-Day, and there is a dogged determination to be jolly on most of the faces one meets, let the frost and the wind bite never so keenly. At the windows of the houses of the well-to-do, little heads with rosy cheeks, laughing lips, and sparkling eyes are to be seen. Happy children, what care they for the frost or wind ? They have their toys, their sweets, their Christmas-boxes from Papa, Mamma, and Uncle Jack and Aunt Fanny. And good Papa has taken seats at Drury Lane, or Covent Garden, or the Standard, or the Surrey, or at one or other of the pantomime houses, and to-night they will see the pantomime, and already the boys, in imagination, are revelling in the thwacks the “jolly old clown” will give poor pantaloon and the long-suffering policeman ; while tender little maidens think pensively of the graceful harlequin and the beautiful columbine. Here and there the bells are ringing, for it is, as yet, early morning. Near to

Regent's Park stands, in the midst of many graves, a church. Peering in at the open door is a man supporting himself on crutches. He is dressed in a seedy frock coat, buttoned tight up to the chin ; a pair of grey trousers, evidently more fitted for summer wear than for this bitterly cold Boxing-Day. He has on a high hat, and a pair of well-worn patent leather boots. His right leg is drawn up and contracted ; the hands, that convulsively grasp the crutches, are blue with the cold. The face, which is handsome and clear cut, is that of a man yet quite young, not more than twenty-two at the most. He is looking with a strange, fierce glare at what is going on in the church. The face is worn with pain and suffering. At his feet shivers and crouches a mongrel dog—something of the fox-terrier about him—a dirty white, which looks dirty grey against the snow, and here and there a patch of black and brown. The dog's eyes are fixed upon the man with a look of almost, or perhaps more than, human sympathy, while every now and then it gives a piteous little whine. For some time the man has stood there unnoticed. Heedless of the wind and the cold, he has been watching intently ; presently, he begins to back slowly from the door, and then, with a muttered exclamation of impatience, he hobbles away behind a tombstone. The dog follows, and at the words, "Down, Spangles, down!" crouches in the snow at his master's feet. A little procession comes from the church, headed by a tall, bearded man of thirty-five, and a young, fair girl of eighteen, evidently bridegroom and bride. The man has a kindly, frank face—he grasps tightly to his side the arm of his newly-made wife—he looks calmly proud and happy ; the bride leans lightly on his arm—her girlish, almost childish, face is pale ; the pretty lips are tightly set, and the large blue eyes look round sharply with a half-expectant, half-frightened expression, as if searching for someone she expected, yet feared to see. On her way down the churchyard she passes the tomb behind which cowers the cripple ; as she passes she starts and shudders. Is it the wind among the trees, or did she hear a low moan ? It was so faint she is uncertain. The bridegroom whispers some loving words into her ear, and the rest of the party are laughing and chatting ; she was mistaken, she thinks ; but there is a startled look in the pretty face, and the bridegroom's words are lost to her ears, for her thoughts are far away. As the wedding party enter the carriages and drive away, the cripple hobbles from behind the tombstone, and follows with the dog at his heels as quickly as he can, keeping her carriage in view until a turn on the road sweeps it and her from his sight for ever. For some few moments he stands there with the dog moaning at his feet ; then, slowly and painfully, he drags himself along in the direction of the canal bridge ; there is a hopeless, far-away look in his eyes, and his face is deathly

pale. Down the towing path he hobbles with difficulty, the dog dejectedly following. No one notices them. Half-an-hour later a passer-by pauses for a moment to look over the bridge, and sees a man leaning against the brick-work of the arch; he notices the dog at the man's feet, and sees that the man has a pencil and note-book in his hands. "Sketching, probably," he thinks. "Cold morning for that sort of work," he says, leaning over the bridge and addressing the man on the path. The cripple looks up with a dazed stare, but does not answer. The man on the bridge shivers. "Too cold to stand still and watch you, anyway," he mutters, and goes away. The cripple continues to write. From the church across the road come the deep rich tones of the organ pealing out a Christmas hymn.

* * * * *

An hour later a policeman is crossing the bridge, and, hearing the whining of a dog, looks over, and sees a mongrel, wet and trembling, staring into the water.

On the towing-path is a man's hat.

Leaning against the brickwork is a pair of crutches.

* * * * *

After dragging the water for some time, the dead body of a man is found, and laid upon the towing path.

Kind hands wipe reverently the mud from the face, and the mongrel cur crawls between the legs of the little knot of people surrounding the body, and, with piteous whines, licks the cold hands of its dead master.

* * * * *

The inquest is over.—Verdict: "Suicide while in a state of temporary insanity." Some of the jury were inclined to a verdict of *felo de se*, but the coroner tells them "all men are insane, more or less, and evidently the deceased was no saner than his neighbours;" so all the jury are eventually unanimous for "Temporary insanity."

A packet of letters, tied with a bit of spangled tape, is found upon the body. The letters are received as evidence, and as, such, are read at the inquest.

All save two are in a woman's hand-writing; if you care to know the contents of some of them, dear reader, you can do so.

LETTER NO. I.

Addressed to Edward Williams, Esq., The Tambour Music Hall; signed "Rosy."

DEAR, DARLING TEDDY,—Your dear, dear letter has just come, and I am jumping for joy. I am *so* glad—only think of our being engaged together at the Rotunda Theatre. Won't it be jolly, dear? The pantomime always runs ten weeks at least there, and perhaps it

will go twelve. Think, dear! three whole months we shall be together—then there are the rehearsals—and *how we will rehearse* our trips won't we, dear? Surely there never was such a happy little Columbine as I shall be. And, Ted, dear, *no Columbine ever loved her Harlequin as I shall mine*. Of course, you dear old stupid, I love you as much as ever. How can you ask such a thing? I am to have six pounds a week, and half salaries for all morning performances and rehearsals. Six pounds, dear Teddy! I can save out of that, and dad and mother and the boys will be all right now until Easter, when something else is sure to turn up. I hope so, for it is a hard pull. Dad's rheumatics make him very cross, and mother does nothing but grumble about the shabbiness of her dress and the boys' clothes. I don't think she means to be unkind, and I wouldn't breathe a word about it to anyone except you, dear old Teddy; but it does seem a little hard upon me sometimes to have to provide for so many. Never mind; the boys will be growing up and earning something for themselves soon, and then it won't be so hard. It's no use thinking that dad will ever do anything again, and poor mother always was rather helpless. But no more of the grumbles, dear Teddy. What shall our trips be? Hornpipe with a solo for you, Teddy (I don't believe there is another hornpipe dancer like you in the world, dear); a jig and a Spanish fan dance would be pretty, wouldn't it? Oh, how I wish December would come! Shan't we be a happy party? You and me, and dear old Tom Howel, the Clown, and Harry Rovini, the Pantaloon. Quite a family party, isn't it, dear? Now I must leave off scribbling, dear old Teddy. I have got such an idea for my dress—*black and white*, dear; but you wait and see. Good-bye, my dear Teddy; you will be tired of all my gossip. Write by return to the Theatre Royal, Barnchester, where we shall be for the next six nights. Fancy Boxing-night! Oh, Teddy! it can't be true—to see each other every night, and dance together for three whole months! Good-bye for the present, darling.

Your happy, happy, devoted little

Rosy.

LETTER No. 2.

Dated Dec. 30th, and addressed to E. Williams, Esq., *Charing Cross Hospital*.

Oh, my darling, my poor, poor, dear Teddy! I am mad nearly. What shall I do? I have not slept since the accident! It is too awful! On the first night, too! How is the poor leg? Oh, those cruel carpenters! How could they make such a mistake? I gave them the bat three times, and saw them at the leap; they *were* there, and ran to close the bridge, which had been left open, when you took

the leap and went crashing through into the cellar. Oh, my darling, my darling! I shall never get the sight of your poor white face out of my mind as I saw it when they carried you away to the hospital. Oh Teddy! dear, dear, kind Teddy! they say you must not see anyone for a week at least. What shall I do? Yesterday I walked round and round the hospital until people began to stare and follow me, and I had to go away. I kept looking up at the windows, wondering where you were lying. Oh the long, weary days and the nights! I HATE the theatre now. I cannot bear to go into it. Dear old Tom is very kind to me, and tries to cheer me up, but I HATE it all; my feet seem like lead; I cannot dance; and Stephens, who is Harlequin in your place—it isn't his fault, poor fellow, I know, but I cannot bear him to TOUCH ME OR COME NEAR ME. It is awful, dear, to think of you lying in the hospital in pain and agony, and I trying to smile and dance with another. Oh, Teddy! after all we have looked forward to, for this to happen. But be sure that I still love you, dear, more and more because you are suffering. When they will let you, write to me, won't you? Good-bye, dear, darling Teddy. A thousand kisses from your heart-broken
Rosy.

P.S.—Do get well quickly, dear! *Do—do—do!* I cannot bear it; it is awful without you!

LETTER NO. 3.

Dated Feb. 30th, and addressed to E. Williams, Esq., Charing Cross Hospital; signed "Tom Howel."

DEAR OLD CHUM,—I am awfully cut up at what you tell me. It is hard lines at your age to be crippled for life. It is hard enough, anyway, in our profession, to get along if we are well; but God knows, old chap, what you are to do now. I felt inclined to smash those d—d carpenters, but it seems it was not altogether their fault. They ran to shut up the bridge just as you took the leap. There has been a devil of a row, of course, but nothing has come of it. I have collected seven pounds fifteen for you, old boy; it will be something, not much—but better than nothing at all, eh? I don't know whether I ought to tell you, but it seems to me I ought. There is a swell after Rosy, old man; he got introduced to her father and mother somehow; and you know what they are—bloodsuckers, I call them. He seems to mean straight, and has tin, and wants to marry Rosy. The poor girl is broken-hearted. I can see how they are worrying her at home. You know how she has always worked for them. The swell—Mr. Handford, his name is—comes every night to the stalls or to a box. For several nights he sent her bouquets, until he saw she hated it, and always gave the flowers away, and then he dropped it. I think she is awfully fond of you still, Ted, but

women don't seem to have much will of their own; and what with the old man and woman on one side, and Handford (who I am bound to say seems a good sort) on the other, there's no telling what may happen. It is rough on you to tell you this, old man, but I think I ought. I meant to say something about it the other day when I saw you, but I couldn't pluck up the heart to say it, so I thought I'd better write it. I am sorry for you, old chap, for a better harlequin or a better pal never turned on a stage than you. God bless you, old chap, and may things turn out better than I fear, is the wish of

Yours truly,

TOM HOWEL.

LETTER NO. 4.

Dated Oct. 15th, 1884, and addressed to Edward Williams, Esq., Mercury Buildings, Lambeth.

DEAR TEDDY,—How am I to write what will make you hate me for ever? Yet, if you knew what I am suffering, I think you would have some little pity for me. Dear Teddy, try to believe me, I LOVE YOU STILL, but—how am I to write it?—we must think no more of each other after this. All MUST be over between us. I am—I must write it—engaged to be married to someone else. Oh, dear, don't think me false in the *one* way. I do love you still—I do indeed, dear—but we must not see each other again. If I were alone in the world it would all be different; but there are father and mother and the two boys all depending on me, and since the pantomime I have only had eight weeks' engagement, at two pounds a week—sixteen pounds to keep five people seven months. All this time they have been urging and persuading me to marry him. Yes, HE is rich. I told them again and again I never would; but could I see them starve? Think, dear, what it has been to me to see them suffering, and to have them night and day dinging in my ears that it is all my fault—that I could help them, make them rich and happy if I would, and yet I obstinately let them starve. I hear lately they have been taking *his* money and *his* help, and it has been all awful, dear. He is good and kind, and I have told him all about you, and he knows, but is willing to take me in spite of it, and says I shall love him yet. I cannot do that, but I will make him a good wife. Oh, Teddy! dear, dear Teddy! the last time I shall write to you to have to write these cruel things. I know I deserve your hate; but my mother and father—what was I to do? They would never let me speak of you or mention your name. HE wants to help you, and will write to you. Dear Teddy, for the last time, try to forgive me; try to think, if I were ALONE, I would never do this dreadful thing; try to think kindly of me—I am only a silly girl. I cannot write what I am feeling, but

my heart is breaking, dear, and my head confused, and I can hardly see the paper for crying, or hold the pen, I am shaking so. Dear, dear old Teddy, God bless you, and forgive me the wrong I am doing you. I shall always think of you and pray for you. Try to forgive and forget me.

Your unhappy, heart-broken friend,

ROSY.

Letter written in pencil in a note-book, signed Teddy; addressed to Funny Little Tom Howell, T.R., Rotunda.

Boxing-Day.

DEAR TOM,—As I write this, you will be looking after your props and seeing to your supers for to-night, Boxing-Night. And where do you think I am, old pal?—stuck up against a canal bridge, writing these, the last lines I shall ever write on this earth. Old man, it is twelve months to-day since we had our last rehearsal together, and all looked so bright; twelve months since I took that last leap (the last but one, rather), and found no one to catch me on the other side. Well, old man, to cut a long story short, I have just seen her married. *I have seen her ride away with another man!* May she be happy. She's not so much to blame. If I had not broken my leg, she'd have stuck to me true enough; but the father and mother have worried her into this. I am going to make it easier for *him*, and perhaps for her. It isn't in reason that he will like the idea of her loving another man. In spite of all, Tom, I believe she does love me still; but he won't mind her loving my memory, and that is all that will be left of your poor crippled pal by the time you get this. For old times' sake, look after poor old Spangles, if you ever find him; the poor old brute is watching me now as if he knew what was up. I believe he does. Also, do this for me. If my body is found, let her letters be buried with me; the bit of spangled tape, too. She wore that in the first dance we ever did together. I asked her for it "for luck" that night, in fun. It has never left me since. Not much luck has it brought me, eh! old boy? Try to see her and tell her I forgave her everything. I understood how she had been driven to it; and give HIM back the £20 note you will find wrapped up in this. I know it came from him, although it came anonymously. Tell him I do not want anything from him, but a promise to the dead—that he will be good and kind to her, for a purer, better girl never breathed, although she did throw me over; he'll forgive her that, no doubt. My hands are so numbed with the cold, I must give up, Tom. They will be colder presently. Odd, isn't it? The church organ over the way is playing; so I'm going off in the regular way to slow music. Don't think badly of your old chum—it is better so. I could earn nothing now; I am helpless, and will not be a burden on my friends.

Good-bye, Tom. Remember me to Rovini and all the boys, and don't forget about the letters; I shall sleep quieter if they lie with me. Good-bye, dear old pal.—Yours,

TEDDY.

P.S.—Now for my last leap, Tom. *Will there be anybody to catch me on the other side this time? God knows.*



A Memory.

BY MARIE BANCROFT.

There is a dale, a peaceful dale,
Where shadows fall of lofty trees,
Where murmurs thro' the mountain's wail,
Like spirits' whispers on the breeze.
And past a flowing river pours
His silver waters to the sea;
Whilst high above the sweet bird soars,
Cutting the soft air silently.

And there when dark'ning eve had thrown
Her shadows o'er the deep blue sky,
I've often sat and thought alone,
Recalling happy days gone by;
And often visions would arise,
Woven in Fancy's fairy loom,
And conjure up before mine eyes
Fond pictures of bright days to come.

Oh, peaceful dale! Oh, blesséd dale!
In dreams I may return to thee,
And hear again thy murmurs wail,
And soothe me with their melody.
And when my evening may at last
Be changing into solemn night,
Such be my memories of the past,
My visions of the coming light.



This German Cook.

BY WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

MY friend Achitophel Chumplebunny, though a comic poet, is a cheerful and contented man. The fact is that he combines drysalting—whatever that may be—with humorous verse as a source of revenue; the former brings him in a prosaic two thousand a year, which, added to the hundred guineas or so accruing to him by reason of his metrical contributions to *Puck*, *The Universe*, and *Veracity*, makes up a comfortable income. He lives, in fact, as the French figuratively put, “like a cock in paste,” and has set forth the fullness of his well-being in one of his own diverting poems, which, as he has confessed to me in strict confidence, was specially intended to describe the exceptional felicities of his mundane condition. It begins thus :—

I am prosperous in business and healthy as can be;
My Amelia is good looking and affectionate to boot;
Like an emu I digest—from poor relations I am free—
I've a pretty taste in *bric-à-brac*, and play upon the flute.

Chumplebunny has indeed much to be thankful for. As may be gathered from the above *quatrain*, he is musical, as well as poetical and drysalterian. To hear him play a Scotch Air with Variations on his favourite instrument would at any time draw tears from the most hardened cynic. Its effect upon his dogs must be heard to be believed in. It makes them “sit up” and wail. When they see him open his flute-case their fine lively countenances become sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, and the expression in their tails denotes an agonised consciousness of coming and inevitable woe. To those who may deem it strange that a drysalter should be thus endowed with power to wring the hearts of naturally cheerful quadrupeds, I would observe that Chumplebunny's flute playing is not to be listened to unmoved, even by human bipeds of singular fortitude and resolution. I myself have felt the pathos of it so poignantly that I have more than once quitted the room—aye, even the house—in which he was performing, in order to avoid being compelled to give way to my feelings. I found that whilst I was within hearing of Chumplebunny's flute my sadness steadfastly declined to be com-

forted. Nothing sort of distance—considerable distance—would revive my shattered cheerfulness. So I withdrew into another parish, and smiled again.

In his wife, children, dogs, flutes, and old china Achitophel Chumplebunny rejoices exceedingly. He is justly proud of these accessories to his happiness, and considers each of them absolutely first-class of its kind. But the article upon the possession of which he especially plumes himself, I incline to believe, is *His German Cook*. Her name is Thekla Schwefelschweif; and, in his estimation, she is far above rubies. I know Thekla well; indeed, I have reason to believe that my familiarity with her native idiom has established me firmly in her good graces, and that she is polite enough to consider me an exception to the rule she is accustomed to propound with relation to my compatriots, viz., that they are “*Dummkoepfe*,” or dolts. She is a short, squab, powerful woman of thirty or so. All that can be seen of her, in the way of beauty unadorned, is red—bright, robust, rough red. In cheap neighbourhoods a flushed popular sausage may be observed, which, in its uncooked state, exhibits the exact normal hue of Thekla’s face and arms. This tint has been imparted to them by oceans of hard water and tons of stinging soap; for cleanliness, in Thekla’s rules of life, ranks “with and after” godliness, and she has been graphically described by a fellow-servant as “one o’ them perlick noosances as is always a washin’ of their faces and ’ands.” It is even rumoured in Chumplebunny’s neighbourhood—he lives in a highly respectable London suburb, where foreign servants, by reason of their infrequency, are regarded as objects of absorbing interest—that once a week, during the small hours, when my friend and the members of his family are buried in slumber, the basement of his house becomes refulgent with inner light; and that the policeman, prompted by this untimely radiance to cast a professional glance at the kitchen window—with fire or burglars in his mind’s eye, presumably—has caught glimpses of Thekla, in native worth and honour clad, much ruddier than the cherry, and indulging in orgies of self-purification with a Bath brick and a nutmeg-grater. When recounting this incident in select circles, as I am told, the policeman claims to have veiled his face and fled as soon as he realised the situation; but his revelations, widely disseminated by those to whom he originally confided them, have invested Thekla with no inconsiderable local celebrity. But for the inconvenient lateness, indeed—or rather, earliness—of the hours at which she performs her Hygeian rites, my friend Chumplebunny’s front garden would probably be thronged at intervals by his fellow-parishioners, bent upon witnessing Thekla’s performances with the Bath brick and nutmeg-grater. As it is, when she is seen in the

streets near her abode—which is but rarely, as she does not get on with British shopkeepers, and scarcely ever takes a holiday—she is the object of devouring and awe-stricken public curiosity.

Chumplebunny and His German Cook appreciate one another with a fervour and intensity that seldom pervade the mutual admiration of persons differing widely in sex, nationality, and social station. She considers him a paragon of genius, nobility, and manly virtue; he regards her as a sort of female phoenix, rising daily from the flames of his kitchen fire to dispense blessings to himself, his family, and friends. He is never weary of dilating upon her varied gifts, characteristics, and idiosyncracies, the observation and study of which have been an inexhaustible source of entertainment to him for some years past. None but Achitophel Chumplebunny can do justice to the achievements of Thekla Schwefelschweif. I therefore propose to let him describe some of his domestic experiences, in connection with that remarkable Teuton, to the readers of this Annual, as nearly as possible in the language in which he has often narrated them to me.

“You may remember that, some eight or nine years ago, I was living in Berlin, where I represented the great firm in which I am now a junior partner here. It was on the left bank of the Spree that Thekla first entered my service, on the recommendation of a younger sister, who had theretofore held the office of cook in my household with somewhat infructuous results, as far as my domestic comfort was concerned; for Nature had intended Minna Schwefelschweif to achieve distinction as an acrobat. Her proper sphere in life was the public circus, not the private kitchen; consequently, though teeming with ‘excellent differences,’ in which—being myself a fair athlete—I took great delight, she failed to meet my views in connection with the culinary art. Minna was a pretty, meek-faced girl; but her figure was that of a muscular stripling, displaying none of the more salient outlines usually characterising persons of her sex. She was as agile as a cat, as strong as a Dartmoor pony, and as hard as nails. As an illustration of her aptitude to athletic exercises, I may mention that one morning, whilst writing in my study, I found my attention distracted from my correspondence by a mysterious thumping and stamping overhead, for which I could not account by any conjecture based upon my previous domestic experiences. The sounds resembled those produced by very energetic carpet-beating, varied now and anon by the heavy thud of a paviour’s hammer. I hurried upstairs, curious to discover the origin of these strange noises. It was this. My eldest son, a powerful lad of eighteen, had been taking boxing-lessons of an English gymnast employed in Renz’s circus. On the

occasion in question, Minna—fired by ambition to acquire some rudimentary knowledge of the noble science of self-defence—had persuaded ‘der junge Herr’ to put on the gloves with her; and I found her in a large empty room, just above my study, facing my Onesiphorus in a spirited pugilistic pose, with the light of battle gleaming in her usually mild blue eyes; in a word, giving and taking hard, dry blows, that made my ribs ache sympathetically as I listened to them. I am firmly convinced that, guided by pure and uninstructed fighting instinct, she was more than a match for Onesiphorus, although his instructor had pronounced him ‘uncommon handy with his mawleys’; and the boy himself, filled with youthful admiration of her pluck, vigour, and litheness, confided to me that ‘Minna was a real brick, and had given the red-bearded Schutzmann in our street a rare old hiding when he tried to kiss her!’ I could fill pages with anecdotes of Minna’s eccentricities; how, when roll-skating was all the rage, she assiduously practised that swooping exercise in the kitchen with my eldest daughter’s best pair of Plymptons, and, being detected one day, in her alarm skated backwards through a doorway crowning the *escalier de service*, and fell down two long flights of stone steps with a quite inconceivable clamour; how, having gone out latish one summer evening without the street door key, and being at daggers-drawn with the porter, she contrived to clamber up the front of the house by the aid of some trelliswork and creepers, scaled the balcony of our drawing-room, and bounced in at the open window of that apartment whilst my wife and I were playing an absorbing match at piquet, her sudden apparition paralysing Mrs. Chumblebunny with affright; how a house painter, having become enamoured of her charms and making passionate proposals to her, *en tout bien et tout honneur*, whilst standing professionally on a ladder outside her window, she incontinently hurled him into space, ladder and all with one fierce thrust of her muscular arms, and effectually healed his love-pains by the counter irritation of a skinful of sore bones. But this were digression, of which sin I have perhaps been already guilty. Let me, therefore, revert to a subject that is ever welcome and congenial to me; that of my German Cook.

“Appearances are more than usually deceitful in the case of Thekla Schwefelschweif. Few objects more prosaic than her form and face have ever met the human eye; but at soul she is a poet, and her views of life are strongly impregnated with the spirit of romance. Her odes are as good as her *ragoûts*—if anything, better—and she turns out ballads and *entrées* with equal facility. Although true poetry lurks in her sweets, she is capable of keeping her two creative faculties quite distinct, in practice; joints and side-dishes are not the

favourite themes of her lays, and I have never known her to make a hash of a sonnet.

"As a cook of the fine old incongruous German school, she is all that the fondest heart could wish; her "Knobs," "Sailor's Flesh," and "Looking-glass Eggs" are masterpieces, each in its kind. But she appeals even more strongly to my sympathies as a poet. I, as you know, not infrequently produce verses, though in a far lighter vein than that which runs through Thekla's compositions. These are never frivolous; they are, indeed, altogether lacking in humour, and occasionally soar to considerable heights of pathos. When I am sad—a physical condition by no means unfamiliar to comic writers—her mournful numbers stir a responsive chord within my breast, and I feel that it were little short of profanation to rebuke so plaintive a bard in connection with an abortive sauce or a blighted gravy. Thekla, moreover, holds me in high consideration as a kindred spirit. She cannot read my verses, being unacquainted with the rudiments of the English language, which she contemns as deficient in homogeneity; but she honours them with her entire approbation and esteem. It has even reached my ears that she considers me the first of living English poets, which is the more subtly flattering in that my works are utterly unknown to her; her judgment of me being, therefore, the outcome of pure faith, rather than of servile comparison.

"Entertaining this opinion of my poetic gift, it is not surprising that she should have addressed to me the majority of the works composed by her during her sojourn under my roof. I have received from her birthday odes, poems appropriate to the festive Christmas season and New Year metrical greetings, one and all characterised by original thought, excellent versification, and caligraphy of the most elegant and finished description. The orthography and punctuation of these effusions are simply faultless. I am open to wager a year's income that the world does not contain a cook of British birth capable of producing, in our vernacular, the equivalent of any one of Thekla's occasional poems.

"But the romantic strain that permeates Thekla's individuality does not exclusively reveal itself in the form of verse; from time to time it prompts her to action, so curiously out of keeping with the commonplace routine of every-day English life as to be absolutely surprising. For instance, on family anniversaries or occasions of special interest—as when a new book, song, or operatic libretto of mine is brought out—it is her delight to crown me with laurels, which she dexterously weaves into wreaths several sizes too large for my head, so that I have to wear them as Collars of Knighthood are worn by the illustrious possessors of those emblems of chivalry. Nothing

would induce me to omit the induing of these garlands when offered to me by Thekla; for once—it was on a birthday morn—she had laid a wreath on the chair before my writing-table, and, not seeing it there when I entered my library in a hurry, I sate down upon it to its irretrievable ruin. Thekla, who was watching me, fled noiselessly to the bottom of the garden, where she was found, hours later, in the fowl-house, shaken by emotion, and, like Niobe, all bathed in tears. We had a great deal of anxiety that day, and no lunch, in consequence of my mishap with the wreath. Henceforth I have kept my eyes about me on “*Familienfeste*,” and, whenever I have seen a garland lying about, have put it on without a moment’s hesitation, preferring to look like Jack-in-the-Green on May-day to wounding the highly-wrought feelings of my Poet-Cook.

“Upon another occasion, and again quite unwittingly, I was so unlucky as to trample upon Thekla’s susceptibilities with painful and apparently heartless vigour. Mrs. Chumblebunny and myself had spent our accustomed autumn holiday in Italy, whence we returned to London towards the middle of October, and drove home from Charing Cross Station in one of the densest fogs I ever remember to have afflicted the Metropolis at that time of year. On arriving at our house, which was invisible from the roadway—I still wonder how the cabman contrived to hit it off—we naturally hurried indoors, where we were joyfully received by our children. All the servants, too, were in the hall—except Thekla. At the moment, this detail escaped my notice; but after the first bustle and bringing in the luggage had subsided, I missed her and asked where she was? As I did so, I heard sobs, sniffs, and gurglings in the direction of the kitchen-stairs, on the uppermost step of which, crouching, her head muffled up in her apron, and her robust frame convulsed with grief, I found my German Cook. “What ails thee, Thekla?” I enquired, holding out my hand to her; “art thou sorry that we are come back?” “Ach Gott! nein, gnaediger Herr; im Gegentheil!” she sobbed out; “aber Sie haben ja den Triumphbogen gar nicht angeguckt!” (Good Heavens, no, gracious Sir; on the contrary, but you never even glanced at the triumphal arch!) “The triumphal arch!” I exclaimed, “what on earth does the woman mean?” Copious information was forthwith tendered to me by my family, in reply to this question; and, on the following morning, Thekla’s meaning was made indisputably clear to me by the testimony of my own eyes, to my exceeding perplexity and consternation.

“The front of my house, as you are aware, is adorned with a portico, the flat top of which can be reached with some small difficulty by a ‘rapid act’ of descent, in the Baron von Trenck manner, from my bathroom window. Throughout a period of some ten days before the



MISS PHYLLIS BROUGHTON AS OLINSKA IN "MAZEPPA."

date fixed for our return home, Thekla had spent the chief part of her time alternately on this 'bad eminence' and in my front garden, constructing a triumphal arch with broomsticks, rakes, hoes, evergreens, and wire. During this process, as I subsequently learnt, my dwelling became the cynosure of all surrounding eyes—the central point upon which the whole neighbourhood's interest converged and was fixed, without intermission, from roseate morn to dewy eve. Upon erecting her triumphal arch Thekla lavished an amount of labour and ingenuity that might well have sufficed for the building of a cathedral. It was a monument of architectural intelligence and indomitable perseverance. She had stripped all my perennials of their leaves in order to clothe her edifice with verdure, and had squandered at least a month's wages upon wire and whipcord wherewith to keep it together. With that deplorable lack of sympathy with art that characterises suburban populations in this country, the inhabitants of my district had taken a coarsely humorous view of Thekla's arch, and had exasperated her daily by gathering together in great numbers at my gates and making mock, very audibly, of her labours and their result. The soreness of spirit that accrued to her from these ribald demonstrations accounted to a certain extent, no doubt, for her outburst of anguish when she found her 'Triumphbogen' unnoticed by those in whose honour she had toilsomely set it up. But worse remained behind; and I feel assured that to this hour she deems her 'Herrschaft' guilty of black ingratitude towards her. For, when Mrs. Chumblebunny arose from her couch the next morning, and looked out of window upon the road in which we live—a great highway, along which omnibuses run with considerable frequency—she observed a jeering crowd obstructing the pavement in front of our house, and was startled by the sight of several knife-board passengers *summa diligentia*, rolling about an omnibus-roof at the peril of their lives, in very contorsions of merriment. It was, I regret to say, the amazing aspect of Thekla's commemorative arch that racked them with this unseemly mirth. The position, you must admit, was an untenable one. My heart bled for Thekla, whom I perceived to be threatened with 'a sorrow's crowning sorrow'; and I positively declined to play a leading part in the domestic tragedy of which she was manifestly doomed to be the victim. It therefore became Mrs. Chumblebunny's painful duty to intimate to her that the structure in which she took such justifiable pride must be promptly removed, in deference to popular prejudice. The effect of this announcement was to all but sever the bonds connecting Thekla with my family. At first she flatly refused to execute the mandate conveyed to her, on the ground of some venerable Wendish superstition, according to which fire, pestilence, and death are bound to

smite the household of those ill-fated persons who (an arch of welcome having been set up on their account) should wilfully have it pulled down before the expiration of the third full day after their arrival home. Only when it was pointed out to her that I should probably become the object of parochial surveillance as a presumable lunatic if I lent my countenance to the endurance of the arch, did she submit to Mrs. Chumblebunny's decree; claiming, with the sad meekness of a stricken fawn, the melancholy privilege of undoing with her own hands the work from which she had anticipated so much joy, to us as well as to herself. It is hardly too much to say that Thekla watered with her tears every leaf of the laurel and ivy decking the frame of the luckless arch, as she doggedly pulled the whole concern to pieces. She must have shed several pints during the dismal process. For days she avoided my presence; and the pretty present I had brought to her from Florence ignominiously failed to raise a smile to her wan cheek. After her woes had found vent, however, in a dirge of great length and uncommon lugubriousness, describing the demise and interment of her heart's fondest hopes, she gradually recovered her normal cheerfulness, and reinstated me on the pedestal of her esteem, from which my unfeeling conduct with relation to the triumphal arch had hurled me down. Since then we have lived in harmony and concord. I trust that we shall continue to do so for many years to come; for, though I cannot say with truth of Thekla and myself that 'we twa hae pu'd the gowans fine thegither,' there being no plants of that description in my garden, we are firm friends, and it would take a good deal to part us."

I could add to the above several curiously entertaining anecdotes connected with Thekla Schwefelschweif's career in London; but I have already overstept the space-limits prescribed to me by my friend the Editor of this Annual. Haply, I have told enough to convince my readers that Achitophel Chumblebunny and *His German Cook*, whose actuality I solemnly guarantee, are distinct oddities, as human beings go, by no means devoid of humour, and eminently suitable to one another.



Ten Terrible Minutes.

BY E. L. BLANCHARD.

POSSIBLY, few among us have arrived at maturity without being able to recall some period of their lives when they had felt an agony of suspense in a position of extreme peril. I have had my experience with the rest, and I now place it for the first time on record, accompanied by the solemn asseveration that every moment of those terrible ten minutes, to which I shall afterwards have to allude, comes back to me, with what I may call the responsive tingle of a tick of time, though the hour to which they belonged is associated with a memorable day included in a year that passed away nearly half a century since. This seems a long time to look back upon, but to the present remembrancer the event might have happened yesterday, so vividly are the details of a very peculiar predicament impressed upon his mind. How the writer of these lines found himself placed in the awkward and dangerous position, to be afterwards described, will assuredly need a few explanatory paragraphs beforehand.

In the autumn of the year 1833, the most attractive exhibition in the metropolis was that of the Oxy-Hydrogen Gas Microscope, shown at a large saloon in New Bond Street, Piccadilly, and as one of the youthful spectators invited to witness the "wonders of the invisible world," I remember to have been greatly astonished even as a tolerably experienced sight-seer, though still at an early age. It was curious to observe that so many remarkable revelations of the marvels of the miniature universe passed altogether unnoticed, whilst the skeleton of that objectionable insect, the flea, magnified on the disc to the dimensions of a camel, invariably elicited from the company such a curious compliment as three distinct rounds of applause. It was not for me any longer to cling to the old proverb that familiarity bred contempt, and the general admiration expressed on the appearance of this awfully enlarged object led to some quiet rebukes, which would have, perchance, become more audible had I not been gently reminded that no charge had been made for my admission. It was, however, something quite new in the world of science, everybody was talking about the novel discovery, and when I went back to my old school at Ealing, I used to surprise my playfellows by relating what I had

witnessed, and showing them, through a sixpenny convex lens, then sold at toy-shops as a "burning glass," the exaggerated forms of small flies on a leaf, after the learned oratorical manner of the lecturer in New Bond Street.

It so came about that my entomological studies in very early life attracted the attention of a sanguine speculator with whom our family had a rather close relationship. To be possessor of such a powerful microscope was the height of his ambition, and, after various negotiations had been set afoot, it was arranged, in May, 1835, that I should accompany him on a tour through the country to introduce the latest London scientific exhibition to the provinces. The enterprising capitalist, whom I will call, for the sake of distinguishing his prominent characteristic, Mr. Solomon Sanguine, had a profound belief in the speculation resulting in a large fortune. Though on the sunny side of thirty, he had been speculating with disastrous results from the days of his boyhood, and finding that a business he had purchased as an "oil and Italian warehouse" in Old Compton Street, Soho, was not likely to answer his expectations, he sold the shop, bought a horse and gig with the proceeds, and cheerily embarked in a fresh enterprise. Tangible security being proffered and accepted, Messrs. Cutter and Clarke, opticians, of Reading, undertook to supply the microscope with all the necessary appliances, and one of the partners agreed, for a consideration, to accompany the "show" and keep it in good working order. Mr. Solomon Sanguine, carefully coached in his descriptive details, was to be the lecturer, and, though I had not completed my fifteenth year, I was engaged at a nominal salary to fill the office of a kind of secretary, read up subjects for illustration, and make out alluring programmes of the entertainment to be given. I remember that I was rather proud of seeing in print a particular paragraph I had written, setting forth that this "Revelation of the Wonders of the Invisible World would amuse the young, delight the old, please the gay, and gratify the grave." The elaborate lecture I had prepared, chiefly from a familiar volume recording the study of insect life, by Messrs. Kirby and Spence, was read with enthusiastic approval by the light of a bright sunset in spring, under the grove of elm trees then forming a picturesque avenue leading to the grounds of an establishment at that time known as "The Stadium," of which my eccentric acquaintance, the Baron de Beranger, was the proprietor. The place, situated on the Northern bank of the Thames beyond Battersea Bridge, was afterwards destined to have a wider popularity under the title of Cremorne Gardens.

It was then arranged that the marvels of the "Oxy-Hydrogen Gas Microscope" should be first exhibited at Winchester in the course

of the following fortnight, and that a tour through Somerset and Devonshire might advantageously occupy succeeding months. The working partner, Mr. Clarke, was to precede us to the old cathedral city with the microscope and huge gasometers, that all might be in readiness. The enterprising capitalist was to drive down in style with his horse and gig, and I was to start at eight o'clock in the morning, on the day after his departure, by the Andover coach, commencing its journey from the old Knightsbridge booking-office, under the shadow of the Cannon Brewery. On my arrival, after a long, wearisome journey, which seems curious to recall in these days of rapid transit by railway, I found the enterprising capitalist had smashed his gig and killed his horse by driving too furiously into the inn-yard of the tavern where he was to take up his quarters, and a particular lens, magnifying, as was asserted in my highly-coloured prospectus, "thirteen millions of times," had been shivered into fragments. However, though we could not at once develop our fullest resources, faith was kept with the public, and at the appointed date we opened in the capacious Exhibition Room at that period called St. John's Hall. The living objects which I had industriously collected a few hours previously from all the stagnant ponds in the neighbourhood, and which were shown as the remarkable organisms to be found in a drop of pure water, did not tend, I fear, to encourage the growth of those teetotal principles then beginning to find advocates; but the apparition of the Flea, occupying the whole dimensions of the disc, proved a stupendous success, and the poor dried husk of the departed tormentor, rendered transparent through being steeped in Canada balsam, brought down his three rounds of applause as he had done before. He was evidently regarded as the comic actor in our seriously scientific entertainment, and was greeted with shouts of laughter and peals of plaudits whenever he appeared.

Our powerful illumination was produced by the combustion of two gases uniting on a cylinder of lime. This cylinder was fixed on a spindle, and had to be turned by the finger whenever a fresh surface was required. Besides a rather alarming "fizzing," which, as the room was always kept in perfect darkness, could not be readily accounted for by the audience, an occasional cry of pain or groan of despair coming from the interior of the apparatus when the hot cylinder was wanted to revolve, had no reassuring influence. We had to carry about with us two large metallic gasometers, from which the microscope received its supply of light through tubes. The hydrogen was produced by mixing diluted sulphuric acid with granulated zinc, and huge glass carboys for the purpose had to be constantly emptied and replenished, with disastrous effects upon the wardrobe during their conveyance. The oxygen was evolved from black oxide

of manganese heated in an iron retort, an interesting chemical experiment confided to my care some time before the company assembled. When the exhibition commenced the hydrogen was allowed to play upon the cylinder for a few minutes so as to heat the lime gradually and expel all the moisture it might have gained from the atmosphere, and then the oxygen was cautiously introduced, when the brilliant illumination of the large white calico disc followed. Before this happened I had, however, frequent occasion to observe that many who had paid for front seats deemed it prudent to change their positions and get nearer the door of exit.

It was then that I had to explain there was not the slightest occasion for alarm, and that the powerful lime-light used for the oxy-hydrogen gas microscope was the invention of Captain Thomas Drummond, of the Royal Engineers, who, with a view to its ultimate employment for the illumination of light-houses along the coast, had first exhibited the "Drummond Lime-Light" in 1830 at Purfleet, with such startling effect that shadows had been thrown at Blackwall, a distance of ten miles.

How, with fluctuating receipts, the "Scientific Entertainment" was introduced to the inhabitants of all the principal towns and cities of Wiltshire, Hampshire, Dorsetshire, and Somersetshire need not be minutely recorded. It will suffice to say that the enterprising capitalist, having no resources whatever, and failing to discover any probable chance of profit, abandoned the speculation in despair. His working partner prudently took back to Reading what remained of his apparatus; and a youth, scarcely fifteen, and unaccustomed to a vagrant life, found himself, one evening in August, with only two shillings in his pocket, left in a remote country district one hundred and seventy miles from home, only to be reached by a weary walk to London.

Youth has a happy knack of making light of difficulties, and though this was not the issue I had foreseen of my first tour as an entomological lecturer, there was something like an adventure in making the bold experiment of walking back and practically acquiring a topographical knowledge of the high roads leading through the southern counties towards the Metropolis.

The August of 1835 was a remarkably fine month; the harvest was early, the nights were warm and pleasant, huge sheaves of bronzed wheat met the eye in nearly every direction, and all the Somersetshire lanes were overshadowed by apple-tress bearing fruit in rich profusion. Thus, for some miles at least, bed and breakfast could be obtained without the expenditure of more than a penny for a morning roll. There was enough exhilaration in the atmosphere, and sufficient prospect of picturesque landscapes along the route, to

render the possibility of crossing the Mendip Hills and reaching London by way of Bristol and Bath, places I had long desired to visit, easy of attainment, and productive of, at least, mental enjoyment. Resting myself on a stile that came in my way during a long walk from Ilminster, I was pondering over the peculiarity of my position when a jolly-looking gentleman, driving a well-caparisoned horse and gig, came within sight, and paused for a few minutes at the wayside. There was a strap to be fastened, which—though I knew nothing of equestrian appliances except those coming under my notice during Ducrow's summer season at Astley's—I managed to fix at last in the proper place. I was then asked would I like a lift along the road, and the assistance proffered was readily accepted. During our drive mutual confidences were exchanged, and my jovial acquaintance informed me that his name was Harvey, and that he was the landlord of the "Red Lion," at Somerton, to which market town he was returning. Incidentally I learnt that he had married an actress, who had acquired some provincial celebrity in her day, that he had always a great sympathy with the "show-folk," as he termed them, and that on this very evening he had thought of amusing the members of the Farmers' Club—who would have their annual dinner in the large room of his tavern—by showing them a few tricks in conjuring, of which he had been an amateur professor. A few weeks previously he had bought from an itinerant illusionist passing through the town, and unable to discharge a small private account through lack of public patronage, a supply of apparatus which would make a sufficient show for the occasion; but, as all the tricks required confederacy, he could not possibly perform any of them without obtaining the aid of a competent assistant.

As it so happened, I had rendered, in a friendly fashion, to Signor Blitz, the expert plate-dancer and professor of legerdemain, similar services some years before during my schooldays in Staffordshire, and thus I could confidently undertake the very responsible duties of an invisible confederate. In another hour we arrived at that extensive establishment known as the "Red Lion," at Somerton, and, after some substantial refreshment, the landlord and myself arranged two capacious chambers on the first floor, communicating with folding-doors, and rather ostentatiously known by the title of "Assembly Rooms," as an improvised "Temple of Magic."

No charge was to be made for admission, this being a supplementary entertainment given by the landlord in consideration of the many years the "Farmers' Club" had honoured him with their support, but the glittering display of gilt cups, canisters, and candlesticks would have been worthy of a strictly professional exhibition famous for this kind of paraphernalia. A large kitchen table, placed in front of the

fireplace, and covered by a gigantic coloured tablecloth, of an ornamental pattern, looked exceedingly imposing when profusely decorated after this fashion, and a huge shelf underneath, upon which I could comfortably rest, removed all suspicion from the company that anybody was concealed beneath, as several inches of the flooring were still clearly perceptible. I soon discovered that the genial landlord, Mr. Harvey, was a clever manipulator of cards and coins, and that he was thoroughly delighting his audience by the revelation of an utterly unsuspected talent. I had made the "dancing half-crowns" very successfully tell the number of pips on spades, hearts, clubs, and diamonds, respectively chosen from the pack by members of the company, and had astonished a young bachelor agriculturist by tinkling on the rim of a goblet the alarming number of children he would have when he would be married to the lady of his choice.

The great trick, which was to crown the performance of the evening, was now to come. A bank-note, inscribed with the name and address of any individual present, was to be burned before the eyes of everybody in a wax candle on the table, and when this candle was cut up into three pieces, whichever one was chosen, would be found to have, instead of the wick, the rolled-up bank-note, previously supposed to have been consumed. A merry Somersetshire yeoman unhesitatingly lent for the purpose a Bank of England note for ten pounds, with his name and address pencilled on the back, so that the identity of the note could not be possibly called into question. It is not here necessary for me to reveal the secrets of the conjuror's craft, but I may be allowed to explain in a rather indefinite manner that this trick, which was one of the most surprising of those performed by Signor Blitz, had to be accomplished after this fashion. With the aid of some dexterity, in what is technically known as "passing," a false note, frequently no more than a folded piece of tissue paper, is consumed in the flame of the candle, and the ashes are carefully collected. In the meantime, the conjuror, passing behind the table to obtain a suitable tray, contrives to drop on the ground the real note so carefully annotated, which the confederate, with the aid of a piece of wire, twists into the smallest compass, inserts in a fragment of wax candle, from which the wick has been extracted, and places ready for the hand of the exhibitor as he comes round.

From my place of concealment I hear all that has taken place previous to the dropping of the note, but to my inexpressible horror I find that the note has been dropped open, that a fresh visitor arriving at that moment has caused a strong current of air to enter the room, and that the draught has sent the note, which ought immediately to have been inserted in the prepared fragment of candle, fluttering along the floor, and, finally, up the chimney. Thus did the ten terrible

minutes begin. The horrible suspicion, that under the circumstances, I might have been unable to resist temptation, and have feloniously appropriated the money, was the first idea that occurred as likely to be entertained by the kind host of the "Red Lion," now so generously entertaining his guests. To render myself visible, and search for the fugitive flimsy up the flue, would have been to destroy the mystery of the hour's entertainment. If the note went up the chimney, and was blown away into space at the summit, my character would be irretrievably ruined. Never did ten minutes pass so slowly. The conjuror had to pass and repass the table in vain, without receiving that coveted fragment of wax candle with the ten pound Bank of England note carefully tucked up inside, and, in the meantime, filled up the interval by talking with the chief constable, who happened to be present, about a recent robbery that had taken place in the town.

Rescue, happily, came at last, in the form of a little black kitten, which had been sleeping, unobserved, on the warm hob of the fire-place. Hearing something rustling by it had started up to capture a supposed mouse. The friendly paw of puss, after a short chase, brought the coveted possession within my reach. The bank note was restored to its owner in the accustomed manner to his great astonishment, though not without some misgivings, as it had been necessary to perform extra illusions by way of interlude, and the climax of borrowing the yeoman's hat, and sending up from beneath the table that very black kitten, whose existence had been previously unsuspected, brought our entertainment to a triumphant close, and thus ended those terrible ten minutes.



Models at Margate.

A FARCICAL STORY.

BY H. SAVILE CLARKE.

IT was the consolation of Miss Barbox's life that her Christian name was Medora. It was revolting to have such a surname as Barbox, but Medora gave a certain tone to it, just as you can make a little street in Paddington sound like an aristocratic address by tacking Hyde Park on to it. For Miss Barbox was romantic, and as she fondly believed æsthetic; we must add that she was thirty, and though possessed of a small fortune, she had not yet entered into the bonds of matrimony. Her hand had been sought, it is true, by wealthy City

men who were her uncle's friends. Medora was an orphan, and lived with that relative, but she scorned the City, and longed for a sympathetic soul, and as souls of that character were not so common in Peckham Rye as stray dogs and Dissenting ministers, Miss Barbox lived on, though not precisely in single blessedness, for she did not regard spinsterhood as by any means a state of beatitude. It was exceedingly creditable to Medora that she had a soul above the soap that her uncle manufactured, but she cultivated æstheticism under difficulties, for that worthy individual had a fine scorn for poetry and art, and was, indeed, a Philistine of the deepest dye. Thus, though Medora painted, it can hardly be said that she was likely to prove a rival to Mrs. Jopling, she had to conceal the fact from her uncle, whose temperament was symbolised by the highly inflammable look of his nose, and who would inevitably have "flared up" had he caught her at "any such nonsense." In *his* early days women worked samplers, and gave their minds to darning stockings and making jam, and Mr. Benjamin Barbox, though a ferocious Radical in politics, was Conservative in his views regarding womankind. Down-trodden man should advance, and, if possible, become a Common Councillor, but such aspirations by no means included woman.

The curtain rises, then, upon Benjamin Barbox and his niece, Medora, who have fled the pleasant shades of Peckham in "the leafy month of June," and sought the salubrious air of Margate. Barbox's view of life at the seaside might have been embodied in articles of association, and registered under the Companies' Act, for it was strictly limited, and limited to Margate. If a man wanted to go to the seaside he went to Margate. If he went anywhere else, though the Atlantic rollers might thunder at his feet, he did not go, in the Barboxian view, to the seaside at all, and might just as well have stayed at home and manufactured an ocean for himself, with a tub of water and a box of Tidman's sea salt. So to Margate they went, and to Margate Medora conveyed, in secret of course, her painting materials. She would have liked to try her hand at "perpetrating libels on the unoffending sky," as one of Mr. *Punch's* bards wrote the other day, but, unfortunately, Barbox had an uncomfortable habit of prowling about all over the place, and had he caught Medora at "any such games," as he would have phrased it, he would probably have pitched her canvases into the sea. So Medora had to content herself with painting at home, and she could only do that, when her uncle went up to town, which he did pretty frequently, for, like Mrs. Gilpin, he had a frugal mind, and always liked to combine business with pleasure.

On the day on which our story opens Barbox was going up to town to look after his soap-boiling, and Medora had, therefore, arranged for

a sitting with a model, who was doing, as he said himself, a "bit of the briny," but she had not seen the man personally; he had been engaged by a drawing master, who had given her lessons unknown to Barbox.

That gentleman and his niece were at breakfast, and Barbox, who was sitting behind a pile of the remains of shrimps about as large as the pyramid of Cheops, that nearly obscured him from public view, felt at peace with all the world. But it was not for long. Even the rose-leaves, or shall we say the shrimps, of Margate are sometimes crumpled. The letters came, and, as usual, Barbox received several that did not belong to him.

"Bah!" he cried, "the old story: they've re-numbered the terrace, and I'm hanged if anybody knows where he lives. We're ten instead of fifty-six, and the letters are always going wrong."

"It is indeed melancholy," said Medora, as she helped herself to a particularly juicy piece of muffin, "when the out-pouring of one soul to another gets to the wrong soul."

Barbox snorted and felt as if a shrimp had gone the wrong way. "When your lamented mother, Medora, was fool enough," he said, "to call you after the heroine of a writer who, being a lord, ought never to have lowered himself to write poetry, she must have known you were going to be pretty nearly out of your mind with romantic notions. Don't talk to me about the outpouring of souls, pour out some more tea."

Medora silently complied. She thought to herself that her uncle had what he vulgarly called "hot coppers," but she knew that to remind a gentleman of that mysterious and uncirculated form of coinage is always dangerous, so she wisely held her tongue. Shortly afterwards Barbox left the house after the usual scrimmage after his umbrella, hat, gloves, and so forth, which always convulsed the establishment from garret to basement, and produced a sort of rehearsal for an earthquake. Even an artist must order dinner, and Medora went down to do so. And now we must introduce a new character.

Signor Robsini of the Grand Opera House, his bills never said where, and of Her Majesty's music-halls, had been christened Robert Robinson, and brought up in a draper's shop; but with a weak tenor voice, a black moustache, dark complexion, a trifling weakness for alcoholic stimulants, and an invincible repugnance to hard work, what more natural than that he should forsake the counter, change his name, and take to singing, with occasional appearances on the stage at minor theatres. He had been taught a little music by a fond parent who played the fiddle at harmonic meetings, and as he did not sing more raucously than nine music-hall "artistes" out of ten, he was fairly successful. But he chiefly

prided himself on his *bonnes fortunes* with the ladies. He regarded himself as a perfect "Masher"—indeed, "the Champion Masher" was the title by which he was known to the frequenters of the Hall by the Sea and similar institutions. And as Robinson was a good-looking young fellow enough, silly young women, milliner's apprentices and the like, used to write him foolish little notes, and think it an honour to be escorted on to the pier by such a shining light of the musical firmament.

Behold then Signor Roberto Robsini arriving at Medora's lodgings, and, finding the door open (Barbox always left doors open when he didn't slam them), he entered with his usual impudence, and walked straight into the sitting-room. "Ah!" he thought to himself, "this is the house; but where is the dear creature who has written me the loveliest of letters on the pinkest of paper? What a terrible fellow I am among the girls, to be sure, but I must marry and settle down. The girl must have money though, and egad it'll take a good bit to keep me, for I've the tastes of a real swell, I have. This must be the right house, for the number was freshly painted on the door. Where is the lady? I wonder what she admired me in. I gave them that bit out of 'Fra Diavolo' the other night, and that fetched 'em." And as he thought upon that impersonation, the light-hearted young man struck an attitude.

At that moment Medora entered. She had ordered dinner, and was ready, so to speak, for the fray, for she had a sketch-book in her hand. "Ha!" she thought, "my model," and whipping out a pencil she began to draw furiously.

"Stop as you are," she cried, "it is perfect. Michael Angelo in his wildest dreams never conceived anything more effective."

Robsini—we will call him by his stage name—was, of course, hugely surprised, but retained his attitude and stammered out, "Madam, I—"

"Hush!" said Medora, interrupting him. "Don't disturb the ecstasy of the moment; but if you could throw a little more expression into the left eye, I should be obliged." And then she went on sketching as for dear life.

"Madam," said Robsini, completely staggered, "I am flattered! Of course, I'm flattered, by your appreciation of my attitude, but really it's very uncomfortable."

"Nonsense," said Medora sharply. "You're used to it. I shall want you as you are for an hour."

"For an hour," thought Robsini. "What on earth can she mean?" "Madam," he said appealingly, "I'm getting cramp."

"Absurd," said Medora, coolly. "You've only been in the position a minute. Now, pray keep still."

"Madam, I'm in knots."

"Untie them, by all means," said the heartless artist.

"But I'm in agony," cried Robsini.

"Of course you are," returned his persecutor. "How cleverly you seize on the situation. My friend said he would explain my picture to you,—‘The Brigand's Despair,’ and you are the despairing brigand to the life."

Robsini stared at her in amazement. This was a curious reception from a lady who had written wanting an interview. As she spoke he resumed his ordinary attitude, saying "I beg a thousand pardons, madam, but I can stand it no longer. Ugh! I'm stiff all over," and he rubbed himself sympathetically.

"Now," said Medora, taking no notice of his woes, "let me have a good look at you. You'll make a charming brigand, only you must look fiercer."

"Oh!" thought Robsini, "this has only been her larks, but I'm not going to be out of the running." So his native impudence asserting itself, he said, with a tremendous leer, that had slain many a susceptible shop-girl, "Fierce at *you*!"

"At me, of course," said Medora, still thinking of her picture. "I have stolen your heart."

"I hope she is rich," thought Robsini; "but what the deuce does she mean by making the running in this way? No matter, here goes." "You have," he cried rapturously.

"How well he understands the picture," thought Medora, and then continued, "We have loved each other from childhood."

"Eh!" said the tenor, startled.

"And we are about to be united," said Medora earnestly, thinking how well the composition would come.

"My personal appearance has done the trick," thought Robsini, "if only she has money; and if she hasn't I can back out." "I am enraptured to hear it," he cried, and he made a step towards her.

"What did you say?" said Medora, looking at him suspiciously.

"I said I was delighted," said Robsini, noting her change of voice, and speaking more quietly.

"Then mind you look it," said she, in a businesslike manner. "But at the last moment you learn that I am false to you; and when the letter is put into your hands"—

"Ah! the letter," cried Robsini, who was thoroughly bewildered. "I keep that letter near my heart," and he placed a somewhat dingily-gloved hand on his shirt-front.

"Rubbish!" said Medora severely. "You dash the letter to the ground, and then despair. By the way," she went on, in the most matter-of-fact manner, "have you got your clothes with you?"

"Got what?" cried Robsini, who began to think he was talking to a lunatic, and then, recovering himself, he said, "Clothes, Madam! I was under the impression I was already dressed."

"Well, never mind," said Medora cheerfully. "Luckily I have provided them. Go into that room"—and she pointed to a door—"attire yourself, and come forth like a bridegroom."

Robsini was so completely staggered by this proposal that he resigned himself to the situation, and, hardly thinking of what he was saying, stammered out, "But, Madam, they mayn't fit me."

"Oh, they fit everybody," said Medora quietly. "Besides, the last man was just your size."

"The last man!" he shrieked. He was now convinced he was talking to a person out of her senses, and felt as if a piece of ice had been dropped down his back.

"Yes," she went on, coolly arranging her drawing materials, "you'll make a capital bridegroom. There's a velvet jacket with slashed sleeves, purple what-you-may-call-'ems, scarlet sash, buff boots, and all the rest of it."

"Mad as a thousand hatters," thought Robsini; "how am I to get out of this? I'll fix my eye upon her, and argue with her; I've heard that's the proper way with a lunatic." "But, Madam," he said, with trembling lips, "is not—not the dress a little unusual?"

"Oh dear no! You forget you are a brigand."

"Oh yes," he said hastily, to humour her, "of course I'm a brigand."

"Then be quick, you foolish man, and go and put the clothes on," and she turned away from him.

"I must enter into the spirit of the thing," thought the unfortunate man, "or she'll get violent." "Forgive me, madam," he cried, "but spare me. Lead me to the altar—to several altars, but let me go in ordinary attire. Do not lacerate my soul with slashed what-you-may-call-'ems, do not make my heart bleed with buff boots!"

"What do you mean?" said Medora, looking at him suspiciously. Had the man been drinking? she thought. "You talk as if you were on the stage. Whoever heard of a brigand without buff boots? Now, do dress yourself."

"Certainly, madam," said the tenor humbly, for he was frightened out of his wits, and he made for the door leading into the passage; but Medora promptly opened another, and there was nothing for it but to obey her. He went into the room utterly puzzled, and mechanically put on the brigand's dress. A lunatic must be humoured, he thought, but he wished his devotion to the fair sex had never made him keep the appointment with the lady of the pink letter.

Medora was no less perplexed. Who was this interesting-looking young man, who did not, so she thought, appear like a professional

model? Was it the beginning of a romance? Was he some high-born foreigner driven by the ignoble pressure of pecuniary embarrassment to sit to unsympathetic Britons at eighteenpence an hour? Or had he—the thought was rapture—chosen this way of making her acquaintance. Her heart beat wildly at the idea, as she went upstairs to get some Oriental drapery to dispose on the sofa as a background.

She had no sooner left the room than two other people appeared upon the scene—her little maid Polly, accompanied by a worn and seedy middle-aged man, looking rather like a dilapidated waiter, with a decidedly bibulous cast of countenance.

“Well, Mr. Grimes—didn’t you say that was your name?—and what do you want?” said Polly, pertly, as she entered the room.

“Grimes is my name, Miss,” said the stranger, in a voice evidently moist from gin and water, “and England is my nation; a two pair back is my dwelling-place, and sitting for artists is my occupation. I don’t charge yer nothing for the potry, but I charge for sitting. I’m a model, I am.”

“A pretty model you are,” said Miss Polly, disdainfully.

“Young woman,” said Mr. Grimes, sternly, “don’t yer jeer at a man who might be yer father. I was a beautiful model once. Yer should have seen my muscles.”

“I don’t care for muscles,” retorted the damsel. “I’m like the missis—I prefers intellect.”

“Ah!” said the old man, shaking his head, “some young women does, but it’s a perwerted taste. Intellect and a feeling for liquor always goes together—in men, at all events. But I say, Miss, yer haven’t got a mouthful of wittles in the house?”

“Perhaps, if you’re civil.”

“Oh! I’m civil enough. I ask yer pardon if I’ve said anything yer don’t like.”

“What do you say to cold meat?” said Polly, mollified by his humility.

“Well,” said Mr. Grimes, with great deliberation, “I say I like hot better when I can get it. My stomach’s as tender as a babby’s.”

“Is it?” said Polly, looking at him curiously after this physiological revelation, as if she expected to see some external signs of abdominal tenderness. “Well, we’ll see.”

“Thank yer kindly, Miss,” said Mr. Grimes, “and if yer could find me an old coat to put on when I’m dressed for the picture, I’d be obliged. A brigand’s dress is coolish; it doesn’t meet as much as it might in the middle. He doesn’t, so to speak, join his flats.”

“All right; go into that room and dress,” said Polly, indicating a door opposite to that which Robsini had entered, “and you can get

down by the back stairs into the kitchen," upon which Grimes hobbled off with great alacrity.

"I don't know what Missis means by filling the house with such rubbish," said the handmaiden, half aloud, checking herself as Medora entered the room.

"Well, Polly," said her mistress, "I hope my model will be ready soon. He seems a charming man."

"Very, mum," said Polly, grinning.

"He'll look beautiful in his things."

"Oh! will he, mum?" said Polly, thinking that Medora's tastes were peculiar. "I'm sure I hope so."

"He has quite a *distingué* air."

"I don't know what colour that is, mum," answered Polly, "but I should say he'd very little hair at all."

"He might be a Prince in disguise," continued Medora, hardly listening to her. "Didn't you mark his noble brow?"

"No, mum," said Polly, grinning again, and nearly choking with suppressed laughter, "I didn't; but something else had. I see a wart on it."

"Don't be absurd, you foolish girl, or I shall be angry. Now run away to your work," said Medora, and Polly departed, muttering to herself as she went downstairs: "Lor! I believe she's in love with old Grimes. She is so romantic."

Where was her model, thought Medora; he ought to be ready, so she knocked gently at the door. Robsini thereupon emerged clad like a brigand. He had, as he phrased it himself, figured the matter out. If the lady was mad, he must humour her and get away as soon as he could; if, on the other hand, she was sane, and had really been enamoured of his handsome proportions, and had sent for him to paint from him—why, if she had money he would seize the opportunity to make up to her. The "Champion Masher" must be true to his colours.

He came out and bowed profoundly, saying, "Madam, I am here."

"Then please pose yourself again," said Medora, "and let us get on with our work."

"But, lady, you ask too much; I'm really not used to this sort of thing. Anything else to please you," he pleaded.

"Stop!" said Medora, "I see how it is. You are no model."

"Certainly not," he responded, promptly.

"I know your secret," she cried, impulsively. "You are of noble birth."

"Eh!—oh!" said Robsini, rather taken aback. Then, recovering, he said, boldly, "I am."



MR. WILLIAM TERRISS AS SQUIRE THORNHILL IN "OLIVIA."

"I knew it," she said—here was a romance—"and you came here to——"

"To see you, fair lady, of course."

"Ah!" sighed Medora, pressing her hand upon her heart.

"Yes," said Robsini, emboldened by her evident agitation, and remembering some of his old stage business; "and if the love of a heart that has never thrilled with a more fervid devotion, that never——"

His eloquence seemed about to fail him. Such a romantic hero must be encouraged.

"Breathed a purer devotion," murmured Medora, leaning back on the sofa and closing her eyes.

"Hullo!" thought Robsini, "I never had a girl give me a lift like that before—"Yes, yes," he said, "never breathed a purer devotion, a heart that never——" and he was so astonished at being helped, as it were over the stile, that he came to a dead stop again. But one has not pictured such scenes for years without knowing the business, and Medora was equal to the occasion.

"Beat for another," she sighed.

"That's all *she* knows," thought our hero; "but she's not mad, only in love with me." "Yes, fairest," he said, "never beat for another."

Then a hurried footstep was heard outside, and as Medora jumped up hastily, Polly rushed in exclaiming—

"Oh, Miss Medora! I was looking out and I see master in the street talking to a gentleman! He's not gone to town, and he'll be here in a minute!"

"My uncle coming back! How provoking!" cried Medora. "Put the drawing things away, Polly. My dear sir, this is indeed a *contretemps*," she said to Robsini. "My uncle is fearfully hot-tempered, and I wouldn't offend him for worlds."

"You are in danger," said Robsini, in his best melo-dramatic manner. "But I am here—be comforted," and he slapped his shirt-front in the approved fashion of those heroes on the stage who desire to champion injured innocence.

"But you are just the difficulty," said Medora, nearly crying with vexation at the interruption of what she was certain was going to be a proposal, and who knew when it might happen again? "Go back into that room, or you will be caught. You don't know Benjamin Barbox!"

"And he does not know *me*," said Robsini, puffing himself out. "I make a point of braving infuriated relatives whenever feasible. Barbox must pass over my body."

Medora was thoroughly exasperated. This man, whatever he might have been going to say, must not meet her uncle.

"Pass over your body?" she said. "He's much more likely to stamp upon it."

"What?" said Robsini, who was by no means heroic in reality, "stamp on me, and in this dress, and imprint the mark of this ghastly buckle on me for life? Are you sure?"

"Quite," said Medora. "He'll murder you, as sure as you stand there."

"Good Heavens!" he cried. "What an awful man Barbox must be! I fly. But dear me! you will tell me when the coast is clear?"

"Yes! yes!" said she, pushing him into the room.

Then Polly departed, and Medora sat down with a book and composed herself as best she could under the circumstances.

Barbox entered; he had missed the train, and that had not improved his temper. He sat down and took up the paper, folding it with vicious and unnecessary noise.

Here was a pretty business. How long was he going to sit there with an interesting stranger in a brigand's dress in the next room waiting to complete a proposal of marriage.

"Aren't you going to take a walk, uncle?" she asked mildly.

"No," said Barbox, testily, "I'm not." She wants me out, he thought. "What's in the wind?"

As he spoke, a loud sneeze was heard from one of the adjoining rooms:

"What's that," he shouted, jumping up.

"The cat, uncle," said Medora, trembling, but with great presence of mind.

"No, Medora," he said sternly, "it was not a cat; I know the sneezes of my own species, and that was a human sneeze. You are deceiving me. I shall search that room," indicating the door through which Grimes had passed, "and if a loafer lurks upon the premises I'll—I'll boil him."

He rushed into the empty room, for Grimes, as we know, had gone down into the kitchen, and Medora breathed again. He came back in a moment, having, of course, found no one, and then rushed out to the door, bidding her follow him. She dared not disobey, lest he should search the other room; and, the moment the coast was clear, Robsini crept out cautiously. He had heard Barbox talking so ferociously, and was in a greater fright than ever. What an awful man this uncle must be! It was plain from the tone of his voice that he had murder in his eye, and Robsini, like most men, had a rooted antipathy to a violent end of any kind. He reflected, too, that he had no satisfactory means of defence, for, as it was summer, the fire-irons had been taken away, and the only weapon he possessed

was a pocket cork-screw, and that would be a long time in reaching a vital part. What was to be done? Was he to be murdered in cold blood because a crazy young woman had taken a fancy to his attitudes? Happy thought!—the sketching materials. He would make his danger known to the passers by, and might be rescued before Barbox had quite despatched him.

So he took out one of Medora's blocks, wrote on it in large letters "Save me from Barbox," and propped it up outside the window. He had no sooner done so than Mr. Grimes appeared, having refreshed his inner man, and ready for a sitting. "Barbox, by Jove," thought Robsini; "and he doesn't look so formidable after all; but there may be 'reserved force' behind that somewhat flabby exterior, as critics say of a certain actor when he walks through his part. I'll be civil to him."

"Another model," thought Grimes. "Oh, the young viper." And then Robsini said, "My dear sir, I'm excessively sorry to find myself here."

"I should think you wos," said Grimes. "What do yer mean by coming and taking the bread, not to mention the butter, out of another man's mouth?"

"Barbox puts it curiously," thought Robsini, but he said, "My good sir, I would not interfere with your frugal meal for worlds."

"What d'yer want here?"

"Nothing," said Robsini. "I only made a morning call."

"A morning call," growled Grimes. "Now look 'ere, who's to sit to the artist—you or me?" and he opened an old dressing-gown he was wearing, and showed himself also attired as a brigand. Robsini started. Was the whole household mad, that Barbox was dressed in this way, or was he going to sit to his niece? He stammered out "I assure you, Mr. Barbox——"

"Blow Barbox!" broke in Grimes. "I'm not Barbox. My name's Grimes, and I'm a hartist's model. I suppose you're the same?"

Robsini now began to understand matters. This, then, explained Medora's sketching. But why had she written him a letter? However, he was much relieved to find he had so far escaped the terrible Barbox. "No, no, Mr. Grimes," he said. "I'm not a model."

"Then why do you wear those clothes?"

"Twas a passing weakness, good Grimes," said Robsini, recovering his spirits now that he was free from danger, as he thought, "And I'll get out of them at once. Believe me, I won't interfere with you."

Then he went off; but hearing a footstep outside, he took the wrong door in his hurry, and went into the room lately occupied by Grimes.

No matter; he could escape by the staircase he saw leading from it, and he could not help chuckling at the thought of what would happen directly. Barbox was evidently coming back; he would go for Grimes, taking him for the intruder instead of Robsini. Grimes would of course retaliate, so that altogether they would have a royal old time of it. He only wished he could venture to wait a minute and peep and see whether the affair concluded in a properly spirited manner.

It certainly did begin in that way. Barbox rushed into the room, and no sooner caught sight of Grimes than he had him by the throat and nearly choked the life out of him. "Now, villain," he shouted, "I have you at last."

"Stop, sir, stop!" cried Grimes, as soon as he could speak. "Yer'll strangle me! What's this for?"

"You'll see, you burglarious villain. Wait till I hand you over to the police."

"What for?" yelled Grimes.

"For stealing," roared Barbox, furiously. "Why, you've actually got my dressing-gown on."

"Please, sir, I was so cold and couldn't find any old coats," said Grimes.

"So cold! No 'old coats!'" screamed Barbox. "Well, hang me if you ain't the coolest scoundrel I ever met. You'd refrigerate a cucumber. What will you say next?"

"Why, sir," said Grimes, sturdily, "I say as yer sent for me, and I expects eighteenpence an hour."

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" said Barbox, clasping his brow. "My head's going round, I think. Here's a fellow breaks into my house and steals my clothes, and then says I sent for him, and he expects eighteenpence an hour for his pains."

"Certainly, sir," said Grimes. "My figure's been admired in the highest art sukkles."

"Has it?" said Barbox, sarcastically; for he had by this time recovered himself.

"Yes, sir," said Grimes, unsuspectingly striking an attitude near the door leading to the passage, and foolishly turning his back upon his antagonist. "I'm like a statoo."

"And it's eighteenpence an hour, is it?" said Barbox, grimly.

"Yessir, and cheap at the price," said the unsuspecting Grimes, thinking the artist had now come to his senses, and was going to talk business.

"All right," shouted Barbox. "Here goes for sixpenn'orth," and he rushed at the hapless model with a kick like that of Robert de Shurland, which would "send a man from Jericho to June," so that

Grimes went flying into the passage and Barbox after him, uttering inarticulate execrations. They were all in a heap in the hall executing together a really artistic imitation of a Catherine wheel, when Medora appeared upon the scene. The combatants parted, and then followed her into the sitting-room.

"I'll have the law of yer," growled Grimes, rubbing himself.

"The law, you rascal," yelled Barbox, going for him again, when Medora interposed.

"Uncle! Uncle! What is the matter? Pray explain!"

"Explain!" said Barbox, "Egad, I wish I could. Here's a vagabond comes in and prigs my dressing-gown, and says he expects eighteenpence an hour for the job."

"I was asked to come here to sit," said Grimes, sulkily, "and the moment the artist see me he tried to throttle me. Pretty behaviour to a respectable model."

"Oh! I see it all now," said Medora. This was her model, was it? Then, who was the other? The romantic individual who had made love to her. She saw there was nothing to be done but to offer a full confession. "My dear uncle," she said, "I hope you'll forgive me, but I've been painting, studying art, and this man came to sit to me."

"That's all very well, Medora," said her uncle. "But where are your proofs? How do I know you're not trying to screen this man?"

"Why, look here," said Grimes, showing his brigand's dress. "D'ye think I goes about in this toggerly habitooally."

"Good gracious!" cried Barbox. "What is this man? Why, we shall all be murdered in our beds."

"It's all right, uncle," said Medora. "He's only dressed for the picture. Where is my sketch. Why on earth is it put out here, I wonder?" And as she spoke she took the block from the window, and handed it to her uncle.

"Well, well," he was beginning, when in rushed Robsini in a state of wild excitement, which was not lessened when he found himself in the middle of the group.

"I can't get out!" he exclaimed; "there's a man at the door won't let me pass!"

"Ah! another brigand," said Barbox, ironically. "Are you giving a fancy ball, Medora? I posted a man outside to catch these gentlemen. Now, sir," turning fiercely to Robsini, "who the deuce may you be, and what do you want here?"

"What do I want?" cried Robsini. Then he clutched the sketch Barbox held, and went on—"Ah, my friend! my preserver! you saw my appeal for help, and came to my aid. Save me! Remove that perfidious female," and he indicated Medora, "and save me from the

murderous Barbox," and he turned the sketch round and showed Barbox the inscription.

"Save me from Barbox," read Barbox. "Oh, certainly! save me from myself before I go stark staring mad, and fancy myself a bottle-jack like a gentleman I saw in an asylum the other day," and Barbox wheeled round solemnly, like a jack for roasting meat, gave an audible "crick," and then went round the other way.

"Let me explain, uncle," said Medora.

"Don't try, Medora," said Barbox, "things are so mixed that you'll only make 'em worse. You've been harbouring all the maniacs in Margate, and we shall be had up for keeping lunatics without a licence."

"My dear uncle, I can explain," she said. "I wanted a model; this man came, and this"—hesitatingly—"this other gentleman came also."

"You wrote to me, madam," said Robsini, indignantly.

"Never, sir," she returned with equal vigour.

"What, not this letter?" and he produced the pink epistle.

"Certainly not, sir. Ah! I see how it is," she cried, "the houses have been newly numbered, and you have come to the wrong one."

"That's it, Medora, I dare say," said her uncle, feebly, "but for Heaven's sake let 'em go to the right one before I go out of my senses."

"I fly," cried Robsini: "my pink-letter lady will be expecting me. To think that I should keep the fair sex waiting." And he rushed into the next room to change his clothes.

Grimes was disposed of, Medora and her uncle retired, and when they returned Signor Robsini had taken his departure. He, however, considerably left his card on the mantelpiece, not knowing, as he said to himself, what might turn up. Medora shuddered as she read it. "Signor Robsini, the Champion Masher Comique of the Grand Opera and Her Majesty's Music Halls." Was it on such a being she had lavished encouragement? Was this the end of æstheticism and romance? Truly it was a hollow world. So it seemed for a time, when consolation arrived in the shape of an eligible young man, who had no drawback but a slight difficulty with the aspirate, and he succeeded in making her take a fairer view of life. But she never forgot her Models at Margate.



Daft Davie.

BY JOHN COLEMAN.

WHEN I was serving my apprenticeship with the late Mr. Murray, at the Theatre Royal, Edinboro', one of my most intimate chums was a young Highlander named David Macgregor, whose father, although he boasted his descent in a direct line from the Gregarach, was minister of St. Ulph's church. David was educated at the High School and the University, and like his father before him, was destined for the Ministry, but one night he found himself, for the first time, with half a dozen other lads in the students' gallery of the theatre, witnessing a performance of "Rob Roy." From that moment his fate was sealed; he would be an actor, that, or nothing else, so he ran away from home and joined a small company of strollers at Cupar, in Fife, and, after undergoing a few months of poverty and starvation, succeeded in obtaining a berth in Edinboro'. Through a lucky accident, he soon emerged from the ruck. It so happened that the Scotch comedian of the company left us for a better engagement, and when Charlotte Cushman came to play Meg Merriles in "Guy Mannering," there was no Dandie Dinmont. Now this part was made for David, and David for this part, so when he appeared in it, although surrounded by distinguished actors, he made his mark at once. To be sure, one little *contretemps* threatened to endanger for a moment his success, and indeed, the success of the piece.

Although he stood over six feet high, David, like the immortal Apollo Bajazet, had the torso of Heracles, and the pins of Simon Tappetit. The latter, however, being on this occasion encased in boots and breeches, the disparity was not so apparent as usual. When, in her dying agonies, Meg Merriles calls upon the assembled villagers to shout for the heir of Ellangowan, she falls dead in the arms of Dandie Dinmont, who has to drag, or draw her slowly off the stage. Now this operation is, at all times, a delicate and difficult task; and when the representative of the gipsy is of somewhat ebullient proportions, it will be obvious that the difficulty is not diminished. When, therefore, at the supreme moment, she flopped into David's arms, he collapsed, and, to use his own expressive, but not particularly elegant metaphor, came down on his back "like a load of

bricks." Worse still, in his frantic efforts to save himself, he brought the mature and majestic Merriles down atop of him.

The concussion which ensued knocked the breath out of his body, and convulsed both audience and actors. Of course, the dead woman couldn't move, and his struggles to extricate himself only added to the general merriment. The dead-lock was, however, at length surmounted by the people on the stage shutting out the group from the audience, whereupon David arose and "bent up each corporal agent to the terrible feat" of removing the infuriate Sibyl, who kept emitting through her clenched teeth, reproaches—not loud, but deep, the mildest of which were "Blockhead!—brute!—beast!"

I was standing in the prompt entrance when, at length, they succeeded in getting off. There was a dead silence. Poor David stood, hat in hand, humbly deprecating the wrath of the irate tragedienne. At this moment the house burst into a prolonged and enthusiastic acclamation. The sound, always so pleasing to an actor's ear, somewhat mollified Meg, who had a keen sense of the ludicrous, and she herself, burst into a roar of laughter.

Next day, David was as famous as la Cushman herself. The following Saturday his salary was doubled. To be sure, it was only a guinea a week, so even when doubled, the emolument was not altogether princely.

"Rob Roy" was soon afterwards revived for the purpose of exploiting him as "the Dougal creatur." He stood side by side with the great little Mackay, whom Sir Walter, on the memorable occasion when he cast aside the mask, and avowed himself as the Wizard of the North, pronounced to be "the veritable Bailie he had himself conceived," and, although the cast included the entire strength of a company such as I can scarce hope to see again, David towered head and shoulders over everybody. When he reached the last act, the blood of the Red Macgregor's was up, and he leaped about like a man possessed. His fight with the Sassenach soldier electrified the house. In the rejoicings which ensue on the escape of Rob, he developed one or two unexpected accomplishments.

A champion piper and dancer had been engaged for the occasion. Davie snatched the pipes and played "Hail to the Chief" splendidly; then he danced the dancer off the floor. Finally, he sang, in a magnificent baritone, "Macgregor's gathering," and when he came to the words

"While there's mist on the mountain, and foam on the river,
Macgregor, despite them, shall flourish for ever."

I thought the folk would have gone mad.

When the play was over, a mob of his old schoolfellows and college chums waited for him at the stage door, and dragged him over to Frater's opposite, where they made a night of it. This game was continued day after day and night after night. There were dinners here, suppers there, and whisky everywhere. David's popularity continued to increase, and when I left auld Reekie, to become light comedian of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne company, it was at its zenith.

* * * * *

Four or five years had elapsed, and I had almost forgotten all about David and the Dougal, and his misadventure as Dandie Dinmont, when one night I went to dine with some friends in Harley Street. As I stepped out of my cab, a tall, cadaverous, ragged, travel-stained, half-starved looking man, who was slouching aimlessly and wearily along, came almost in contact with me. As we caught sight of each other, he exclaimed :

"Guid God ! that's no you, mon ?"

Had it not been for the well-known voice, and the unmistakable Doric accent, I should never have recognised in that wretched, woe-begone object, David Macgregor.

The meeting was awkward, for a number of swells kept driving up, but I "belled the cat" boldly, and despite the disdain of the lordly-looking flunkeys, I took my poor friend into the hall, and gave him a few shillings and my address, inviting him to breakfast on the morrow.

When he turned up at the hotel next day he was trembling as with the palsy. I urged him to attack the breakfast, and led the way to the assault, but he was unable to swallow a morsel. Looking furtively and anxiously around, as soon as the waiter left the room, he gasped out, apparently not without some sense of shame, "For the love of God, just a half yon, to pick me up for the day." I saw there was no help for it, so I rang for whisky. When he had got a glass or two down, he rallied, and was able to make a pretty fair breakfast, after which he made a clean breast of it.

It would seem that for two or three years after we parted, he kept his hold on the public. He was in great demand in social circles, for he told a funny story, sang a capital song, got drunk with his hosts, or without them ; in fact, he was what the world calls "a jolly good fellow."

"When vice becomes habitual, the power of leaving it is lost." He now went headlong to the devil ; got drunk morning, noon, and night, and more than once disgraced himself publicly on the stage. A little of this went a long way with W. H. Murray, so, one night, after a more than usually disreputable exhibition, David was discharged at a moment's notice.

His downfall was as rapid as his rise had been phenomenal. With his dismissal his popularity ended, and his fair-weather friends immediately turned their backs on him. His father bundled him neck and crop out of doors. His mother, however, supplied him with a five-pound note and a suit of clothes to make a start elsewhere. He speedily spent the one, and pawned the other.

At last he resolved to try his luck in Glasgow, so his sister Jeannie scraped together a couple of pounds for him, and off he went. Immediately on his arrival he obtained an engagement with the eccentric "Alick," manager of the Theatre Royal. Upon his *début* as the Dandie, he took the playgoers of St. Mungo by storm and became as great a favourite in Glasgow as he had been in Edinboro'. He kept steady for a few weeks, but one night, unluckily for himself, at the Shakespere, opposite the stage door, he came across a pack of fast young men of the period; they all got "tight" together, and prolonged the debauch until the next evening.

He came to the theatre mad drunk, broke down on the stage, insulted the audience, and for the second time was immediately and ignominiously dismissed.

After this, David Miller, the famous showman, gave him an engagement at the Adelphi Theatre on the Green, where he made another hit as the "Dougal." He kept sober for a little while, but at a supper given in his honour, to celebrate the success of "Rob Roy," he got drunk again, kept at it morning, noon and night, until he landed on his back in the hospital with D. T. in its most aggravated form.

When he came out, both theatres were closed against him, but Glasgow fair was on, a remarkable institution, which after having died hard at "Bartlemy," where Kean and other great players acted years ago, still survived in Scotland. The most conspicuous features of the fair were five or six huge wooden primitive theatres, places which would hold a couple of thousand spectators, at prices ranging from a penny to sixpence, commencing at the back with ragged, barefooted urchins, and getting more and more aristocratic, as the audience approached the footlights. The actors were frequently people of superior ability, driven into these places by debt, disease, or dissipation.

David had no difficulty in getting an engagement in the most important of these shows. During the whole of the fair time, he might have been seen, night after night, strutting about on the outer promenade, amongst the motley crowd of performers, clad in all kinds of tawdrily splendid, but incongruous costumes, desiring the crowd to "walk up, walk up, and be in time, just a going to begin!"

There were five or six of these performances a day, a task requiring unusual strength, so he had to take "just a wee nip to pull himself together, then anither to straighten himself up for the nicht's wark, then yon, or twa, or three mair ye ken, between the whiles," and so on to the bitter end. When "fou" up to the throat with the fiery stuff, adulterated with vitriol and fusil oil, he slunk away to his miserable garret as well as the poor "Tappertits" could carry him.

Having run the gauntlet of every one of these wretched places, beginning sober and finishing drunk, he was drummed out of booth after booth, till he reached the lowest level in the "bawbee show," at the corner of the "*Saut* Market," and even out of this loathsome "refuge for the destitute," he was ultimately kicked into the gutter. After that, for a time, he had no recollection as to what became of him.

When he returned to himself, he was in rags, and every one called him "Daft Davie." For weeks he was without shed or shelter. Fortunately it was summer time, so he slept nightly (and soundly enough for that matter) amongst a herd of ragged wretches, outcasts like himself, on "the Green," on the banks of the evil smelling Clyde. The actors, especially those of the lower class, were very kind, but, unfortunately, they gave him more "half-yons" of whisky than bannocks of barley, or slices of beef.

At length he awoke to a glimmering sense of his degradation, then he thought he'd go back to Edinboro'. Alas! his father and mother were dead. His sister was married to a rabid Free Kirkite, who would not allow her to hold any communication with him. His schoolfellows and college chums were now fully awake to their responsibilities as respectable members of society, henceforth they got "screwed" decorously at home, in the bosom of their families, and one and all declined to have anything further to do with the drunken and dissolute player.

In his despair and desolation, it suddenly occurred to him that he would make his way to London, where many of his old comrades had attained distinguished positions, and where, perhaps, he might redeem his wasted life and lost opportunities. At the very moment when he stumbled across me on the previous evening he had just reached the end of his toilsome journey, which he had accomplished on foot.

He now protested, by all that was good and holy, if he could only get a chance to retrieve the past, he would "swear off" drink, as long as he lived. Arranging for him to get a few necessary articles of clothing, I desired him to call again next day. This done, I hunted up George Honey, the Comedian, who had been with us in Edinboro', and the two of us went to the Olympic,

where Leigh Murray (another of old Murray's pupils,) was stage manager for William Farren, the elder.

Leigh knew poor Davie well, and readily acceded to our entreaties to put him on as one of the "young men" of the theatre (a kind of superior supernumerary) at fifteen shillings a week. I was glad to hear soon afterwards, that his conduct was so exemplary that his salary was doubled. Occasionally he played a little part of a few lines, and there was even some talk of producing "Guy Mannering" to give him an opportunity of rehabilitating himself by doing the Dandie in juxtaposition with the Meg Merriles of Miss Cushman, the Dominie Sampson of Compton, and the Henry Bertram of Sims Reeves.

I had been in the country for some months, and on my return to town, I went to the Olympic to see Boucicault's latest adaptation from the French, "Sixtus V." At a particular period of this play, while the Sacred College was balloting in solemn conclave for a successor to the Papal throne, a *cortège* of cowed and barefooted friars entered, singing the *Miserere*. As they reached the centre of the stage, the monks came to a halt; the music ceased, the bell of St. Angelo tolled the mystic number which was to herald the installation of the new Pope: Farren was about to cast off the decrepitude of Cardinal Peretti, and proclaim himself Sixtus V., when at this critical moment the leader of the procession plucked his monkish garb up to his waist, disclosing the well known Tappertit continuations, (now, alas, reduced to veritable pipe stems) while he shrieked out:

"Whoo! Tullaghgorum!"

And began to dance the Highland Fling. The audience looked on, astounded, but their astonishment was of short duration, for Henry Farren (Miss Nellie Farren's father) came on the stage, and dragging Davie off by the neck, flung him out of the theatre.

* * * * *

What became of him after that, I never knew. I only know that a few years later, I had been acting in Edinboro' and Glasgow, and was on my way to Southampton, to fulfil an engagement. Although early in April, it was bitter cold, and there was a biting wind, slick in one's teeth. It was about nine o'clock at night when I arrived at King's Cross, and I promised my cabby double fare if he caught the express at Waterloo. As we reached the Strand side of the Bridge, I heard a roar of voices, and saw what appeared to be an army of Volunteers, who, as I subsequently learnt, were returning from the Review at Brighton. Bands were playing, colours flying, the bridge was crowded with spectators, so there was nothing for it but to pull up and wait. Obviously there was no getting to Southampton that night.

The foremost regiment came to a halt, in obedience to the mandate of a solitary policeman, who in consequence of the great central thoroughfare being impassable barred further progress at the mouth of the Strand.

At the word of command the men grounded their arms, the band ceased playing, and a silence fell upon the crowd. At this moment there arose from afar, the triumphant blast of the pibroch, playing, "March! March! Ettrick and Teviotsdale." The sound of the pipes always sets my heart going, so springing out of the cab, I climbed to the box, and looked over to the Surrey side. The moon had not yet risen, or if she had, she was hidden away somewhere behind a cloud. The mist which exhaled from the river shrouded every object before me with a filmy gauze, through which I could dimly discern a regiment of men in the garb of the Gael, tramping towards the centre of the bridge, and preceded by a piper, with his bags in full blast.

The colour of their dresses, (something 'twixt drab and light brown) the mist, and the semi-darkness, made them appear in the distance a phantom host, of which the piper seemed the most phantasmical figure. The pibroch ceased as the regiment halted, and they, too, grounded their arms. The piper turned round and faced the men, and evidently began to sing. At first I could not catch either the melody or the voice. At length the air became more and more distinct, the voice rose higher and higher, the words rang out loud and clear:

"Then gather, gather, gather!

While there's mist on the mountain, or foam on the river,
Macgregor, despite them, shall flourish for ever!"

A thousand throats took up the refrain, till it came down to where I stood, setting my blood tingling, and my heart afire. The sound took me back to Bonnie Edinboro'. I was a boy again. While yet I stood entranced and carried away by old memories, to my astonishment, the piper sprang upon the parapet! Again striking up the march, he came striding down towards the Strand, with as proud a bearing as though he were marching before

"The standard on the braes of Mar."

A sudden horror struck me!

Leaping to the ground, I struggled through the crowd, buffeted hither and thither, but still pressing towards the spectral figure on the parapet. As I approached, the moon burst forth, bright and clear as noon-tide. Despite the iron grey hair and beard, the wan and haggard features, the wasted form, I could not be mistaken, it was my poor friend.

As I called out "David! David! Don't you know me?" the pipes fell from his hand.

"That voice! that voice!" he muttered, "It minds me o' lang syne. David! David! Who spoke of David? He's dead! Dead and gone, dead, lang, lang ago. Woe's me!" With that his head sank upon his breast.

I darted forward, and strove with all my strength to pluck him down, but he tore himself away. Alas! I could see now that he was wild with drink, or delirium, or both, for his eyes were ablaze with the lurid light of madness. The next moment, with a piercing, unearthly cry, he leaped, head foremost, into the river!

Calling for help, I rushed to the other side of the bridge. He had already risen to the surface, and was calmly floating away, with face upturned towards the light. The tide which was rapidly rushing down to the sea, had already carried him a hundred feet from us. Powerless to save, I saw him sink before my very eyes.

The hush of death fell on the crowd for an instant, then there arose a roar of voices exclaiming, "Look! Look! The boat! The boat! See! He rises! Look there!"

As the police boat shot rapidly forward, far away in the distance a white face, with streaming beard and hair, and wide staring eyes, emerged from the water. For a while, it moved up and down in the moonlight, then, looking upon me, as I thought, to the last, it vanished beneath the silent river.



The Convict's Child.

BY SAMUEL K. COWAN, M.A.

GUILTY? Yes, yes, the night was dark,

Methinks I see him now;

I struck, he fell, I bear the mark

Of Cain upon my brow!

My wife was dead before my guilt,

But O, my curse—my shame—

Like blood on my fair child was spilt,

Who bore her mother's name!

A convict's child! no man hath heard,

Beneath yon sunny spheres,

So fierce a curse, as that dread word

Sounds in a father's ears,

Yes; from the dock I saw my child,

Who bore her mother's name,

With tears her bright eyes red and wild—

Her fair head bowed with shame!

Ten years—alone ! O worse than death,
Lost to my God—my child—
Lost to my home—dragging life's breath,
Tainted, accurst, defiled !

A convict's child ? " O better ye
Were never born "—so runs
The Scripture—" than offend," saith He,
" One of my little ones !"

Offend ? O, could offence's hand
Dye with a fouler stain
Than mine, that left on her the brand
Of the first murderer, Cain ?

All thro' my lonely prison years
I saw my daughter's face,
As last I saw it, red with tears,
And bowed to my disgrace.

For years I toiled, till the great sweat
Stood on my brow, and fell ;
Then cried a voice : " Thy hands are wet,
Blood ! blood ! thou child of Hell !"

Once, in a prison-dream, I saw
A happy angel come,
And a bright ring of sunshine draw
Round my forsaken home :

" Play here, dear babes ! " With branded brow
My daughter came, and smiled :
Then spake the angel : " Nay, not thou,
Hence, hence, thou convict's child !"

Ever by that red brand of Cain
My bright-haired child was known ;
Ever, with that black broadening stain,
She stood—alone, alone !

Ten years ! What now, my Saviour, can
My home, once happy, be ?
All surely now beneath Hell's ban,
All lost—all dead—to me !

Ten years ! ten years ! in that black cell,
Alone—alone—alone ;
Like slow, slow drops the cold hours fell,
Turning my soul to stone.

At last—at last—free, free once more,
I heard the Christmas chimes
Ringing as once they rang of yore,
In life's dead happy times.

Sweet, as my own sweet daughter's voice,
I heard those carols fall ;
They seemed to chime : " Praise Him, rejoice,
He shed His blood for all."

But soft ! whose glad, bright face is that ?
A babe of summers four ?
Beneath a sculptured saint he sat ;
All this hath been before.

Yes, in that selfsame place I knelt,
That selfsame aisle I trod ;
Knelt with my mother there, and felt
The presence of my God !

Around her neck a brooch did twine,
A pictured face it bore
Like that bright child's ; that face was mine !
All this hath been before !

I heard the sounding psalm arise,
And soar on wings to Heaven ;
I felt pure tears rush to my eyes
And wash my guilt forgiven !

" What is your name, my happy child ? "
I heard his sweet lips frame
Their simple answer, as he smiled :
Yes, my own Christian name !

" Why did they name you thus—speak low ? "
Then spake the child : " Mama,
My father told me, called me so
After dear Grandpapa."



MISS KATE RORKE AS LUCY PRESTON IN "THE SILVER
SHIELD.'

"And your dear mother, where is she?"
"My mother? There," he said,
And turned his sweet bright face from me
To the skies overhead.

Enough: ten years! now let me die,
Let all my troubles cease;
Let me pass hence to yon bright sky,
My soul at perfect peace.

To her, who died—my child in heaven—
What her dear Saviour said:
"Forgive, as ye would be forgiven;
Let the dead bury its dead!"



"Uncle Dick's Darling."

BY HENRY IRVING.

[During his recent visit to America, Mr. Irving was asked to contribute a sketch to the "Clover Papers," a cheery Christmas Annual started by the members of a literary club famous in Philadelphia. He has permitted me to reprint the anecdote contained in the handsome "Clover Papers Album."—C. S.]

WHEN I was playing in Byron's drama, "Uncle Dick's Darling," at the Gaiety Theatre, my dear old friend, J. L. Toole, was the bright, particular star of that entertainment, and Adelaide Neilson was the "Darling." Now, my friend Toole, amongst many brilliant qualities, has a notable faculty for business, and in the invention of captivating posters and insinuating hand-bills he had at that time no equal. Pray don't think that he cares for such arts now, for he long ago discovered their vanity, when, after playing for a week in a certain place, he met the local bill printer—to whom he had paid a lot of money—and who greeted him with, "Hallo, Mr. Toole! how long have *you* been here?" Still, before this awakening, his activity in advertising was extreme. One of his rivals—an eminent tragedian—was once much moved, when leaving a town, to find his posters covered with the announcement, "Toole is coming!" and the climax of torment was reached when, going to bed that night, he found this stimulating legend pinned on his pillow. Well, my indefatigable friend was not content

with playing superbly in "Uncle Dick's Darling." He busied himself with all manner of devices to popularise the performance. He never went anywhere without a bundle of labels in his pocket, and, if he happened to be in church, or a police court, or any other place of fashionable resort, he was sure to leave behind him a touching memento, sticking in some prominent place, to the effect that J. L. Toole was to be seen at the Gaiety Theatre in "Uncle Dick's Darling" every evening. And I have lately been credibly informed that one of these labels pleasantly adorns the tombs of the Pharaohs.

About this time died William Brough, one of the well-known brothers who did so much good work for the stage and periodical literature. No doubt you have read the genial recollections of them in Edmund Yates's "Reminiscences." To poor William Brough's funeral, in a cemetery a little way out of London, Toole and I repaired one cold and drizzly afternoon—just the kind of day when the gloomy reminder that we are all mortal becomes most oppressive. We saw our dear, dead friend laid in the earth, and, as we turned away, wondering whose scene with the grave-digger would come next, the prosaic suggestion was made that perhaps some degree of physical comfort might be got out of a little hot brandy and water. This idea was embraced with alacrity, and while we were thus consoling ourselves in a neighbouring inn, our attention was attracted by a crowd surrounding an object lying in the gutter. My friend's fertile brain was awake at once, so we quickly made our way to the spot, and found that some too-thirsty soul, tempted by a barrel of spirits which had burst in the street, had drunk not wisely, but too well.

The crowd stood gazing at the body in a helpless way, but my companion knew his cue at once. Pushing his way through the throng—followed by me, his admiring assistant—and suggesting that he was a doctor, he knelt beside the fallen reveller, whose shirt-collar he unbuttoned, felt his pulse, laid a hand on his heart, and performed with impressive accuracy the whole professional routine. The people watched the process with sympathy and confidence, and, when my friend said, "It's not very serious; I can soon put him right again," there was a hum of approval and admiration. Feeling in one of his pockets, the "doctor" took out something, which he applied to the patient's forehead. From another pocket he produced something else, and applied it to one cheek, while a third pocket yielded a further medicament for the other cheek. Then, looking round with a thoughtful and abstracted air, one hand covering the face of the patient, with the other he removed a cap from the head of a gaping and bewildered boy, and dexterously placed it on the beplastered visage of the prostrate Briton. "Now," said he, triumphantly;

“leave him alone for five minutes, and Richard’s himself again!” We then withdrew, and with some celerity jumped into a cab, followed by a suppressed cheer. But we had not proceeded far when a yell of execration broke upon our ears, for the impatient crowd had found that the object of their commiseration was no less a person than “‘Uncle Dick’s Darling,’ Gaiety Theatre, every evening!”



The “Rannerdale Mystery” Solved at Last.

BY FRANK MARSHALL.

YES, Mr. Editor, I promised to send you a *true* story; behold the fulfilment of my promise. You will never find a truer one.

Everyone, who is old enough to remember anything at all, must remember the great “Rannerdale Mystery” in 186—. I will not give the exact year, because it is not necessary. The key to that mystery has never been given—the police, it is needless to say, did not discover it. The oath of secrecy which has tied my tongue and fettered my pen for years is now ended. I am free to speak, to write the truth. I, the great contriver of that mystery, am at last able to explain how the genius of one man baffled the detectives, professional and amateur. Perhaps some of your readers may not believe me; but lovers of the truth never allow a little thing like that to annoy them.

First, let me give a brief account of the person whose disappearance caused such a sensation nearly twenty years ago; and next, for the benefit of those who do not remember, let me recount, as briefly as possible, the chief circumstances of the Rannerdale Mystery.

Charles Heathorp was an orphan. His mother died shortly after his birth; when he was ten years old, his father also died, leaving Charles to the guardianship of his younger brother, William Heathorp; leaving also a will by which all his property passed absolutely to his son on his attaining the age of 24. If he did not attain that age, then it passed to William Heathorp for life, and after him to his children. It is evident, therefore, that however much love Mr. William Heathorp might feel for his nephew, the death of the nephew before the age of 24 would not be such a very great calamity, as far, at least, as his uncle’s worldly interests were concerned. Charles Heathorp was a handsome, bright, merry young fellow. He never

got on, however, very well with his uncle William, who was rather a gloomy personage, being a strict Evangelical, as was his wife. In fact, Charlie did not get on with any of the family. He did not like his cousins, either the boys or the girls; he did not like his aunt Judith; he did not like his uncle William; so that, when he got a clerkship in the office of Her Majesty's Commissioners for Confusing the Public Accounts, he was very glad, as it necessitated his living away from his uncle, his cousins, and his aunt for, at least, the greater part of the year.

But there was one relation for whom he had a great regard; and that was an old maiden lady, a Miss Grattan, a cousin of his father's. Miss Grattan was 70 years old. She enjoyed the best of health, and was remarkable for her great strength of mind and very domineering spirit. She had taken a great fancy to Charlie, and more than hinted that, if he behaved himself, she should make him her heir. Now, this resolution on the part of Miss Grattan did not at all coincide with the views of Mr. William Heathorp, who thought that his four uninteresting sons, and his three equally uninteresting daughters, deserved to succeed to the old lady's money much more than Charlie, who, to tell the truth, was rather a scapegrace. So much it is necessary to tell about the Heathorp family, in order that what follows may be understood.

On August 10th, 186— Charlie Heathorp, being then nearly 20 years old, took his usual four weeks' vacation. The first three days he spent with his uncle William at his house near Watford; thence he went to pay a visit of two days to Miss Grattan. About the 18th of August he went to some friends of his of the name of Monson, who lived in Yorkshire, intending to spend the rest of his vacation there. Mr. Monson had some good grouse and partridge shooting, so that Charlie bid fair to have a very nice time of it.

It is now necessary to speak of a person who played a far more important part in the Rannerdale Mystery than was ever suspected. Charlie Heathorp's closest friend at the office was one Robert Keen, known among his friends and companions as "Bob." He was not blessed with much of this world's goods. His family were very poor; and he had nothing to look forward to but the salary he got from his office, and any money he might earn by his own talents. Bob looked upon his prospects in life as anything but gloomy. He was a young man of very considerable talent; he could use his pen to some purpose, and, though his services were not so highly paid as they ought to have been, he still managed to earn a fair amount of pocket money by writing for the magazines. He was also an excellent amateur actor; his power of making up his face and disguising himself was, indeed, so remarkable, that he often excited the envy even of professional

actors of long standing.* Bob was two or three years older than Charlie Heathorp. On this occasion he did not take his leave just at the same time as his friend ; for owing to Charlie's engagement with the Monsons, the two did not, as was their general custom in the vacation, take a walking tour together.

In course of time Charlie's vacation, like all other pleasant and unpleasant periods in life, came to an end. He was due at the office on the 8th of September ; but he did not turn up ; nor did the Secretary, in whose department he was, hear anything of him. As he did not put in an appearance next day, and no communication arrived from him, on the evening of the 9th the Secretary wrote to Mr. Heathorp, to ask him if Charlie was ill ; or if not, when he intended to return to his official duties. Uncle William had heard nothing from his loving nephew for two weeks. He immediately telegraphed to the Monsons, to know why Charlie had not returned to the office. To his astonishment he received a telegram, in reply, from Mr. Monson to say that his nephew had left there on the 30th of August, having been called away suddenly on business. Mr. Heathorp immediately telegraphed to inquire if they knew where he had gone. The answer was that he had not told anyone where he was going, but that Mr. Monson believed he had gone back to London.

The next day brought no tidings of the missing young man. Enquiries were made at the office among his old friends, especially of Bob Keen, who, however, declared that he knew nothing about Charlie's movements ; that he had had only one letter from his friend during his vacation, and that was written from Miss Grattan's.

As the situation seemed a serious one, the police at Scotland Yard were communicated with, the description of Charlie Heathorp was placed in their hands, and enquiries were at once commenced with the object of tracing where he went, after leaving Mr. Monson's, on the 30th of August. For three or four days the result of the inquiry was very meagre ; at last it was ascertained that a person, answering in every respect to the description of Charlie Heathorp, took a ticket on the 30th of August, from the nearest station to Mr. Monson's place, for King's Cross ; but the most careful inquiries failed to trace his arrival in London. One of the cleverest detectives in the office now took up the case ; he soon succeeded in discovering that Charlie had never really gone any further on his way to London than York. From there he appeared to have gone to Lancaster, on the 1st of September ; thence he was traced to Cockermouth, where he arrived on the 2nd of

* We here omit about a page or two containing a list of all the parts played by Mr. Robert Keen and criticisms thereon ; also an account of some of his published works, neither of which have, perhaps, much to do with the story.

September. He had left most of his luggage at Mr. Monson's, saying that he would send for it afterwards. When he arrived at Cockermouth he had nothing with him but a leather bag and knapsack. Here he seemed to have met a young man about his own age, with reddish hair and a slight limp, who had walked into Cockermouth, with a knapsack, on the previous day. On the evening of the 2nd of September, Charlie and his companion both set out, with knapsacks and walking-sticks, for Loweswater; and slept that night at a quiet farm-house under Melbreak Fell. Next morning, about ten o'clock, they left, saying that they were going to make their way over by some new road to Keswick. A man who was working at a farm in Rannerdale saw them going up that valley, and spoke to them about twelve o'clock on that day, the 3rd of September. After that all trace of the two young men was lost.

The detective now in charge of the case, whose name was Finder, started from the place where they were last seen, and made a thorough search on the neighbouring fells. For two days his industry met with no reward; but, on the third day, he made an important discovery. On the banks of a lonely tarn at the head of a small valley, which was frequented only by sheep and an occasional shepherd, decided signs of a struggle were found; at some little distance there was a pool of blood, and a walking-stick, covered with blood and with what was apparently human hair, was discovered hidden in some thick grass, within a hundred yards of the same spot. The tarn was carefully dragged, and a bundle of clothes, also stained with blood, were fished up; they were torn, and some of the buttons were missing. These clothes were identified, almost beyond all doubt, as those in which Charlie Heathorp had last been seen. The next day a shepherd, who had been crossing the fell near the tarn above mentioned, picked up a razor, on which were stains of blood. This razor was also identified as having belonged to Charlie Heathorp.

It may be guessed that it was not long before these discoveries leaked out and became generally known, through the medium of the press, in spite of all Mr. Finder's efforts to keep them secret. His object was—supposing there to have been a murder, which now seemed most probable—not to put the guilty person on his or her guard, until he had succeeded in getting some clue which might lead to his detection. The next thing to be discovered was—supposing Charlie Heathorp to have met with foul play—what had become of the young man with reddish hair and a limp who met Charlie at Rannerdale? Nothing could be discovered as to this individual. The landlord of the inn at Cockermouth, where they stopped to dine, and the owner of the farm-house at Loweswater could only

say that the two young men appeared to be on very friendly terms. Heathorp's name was on the leather bag which he left behind him at Cocker mouth. No one seems to have known the name of his companion.

Finder continued his thorough examination of the neighbourhood of the tarn in which the clothes had been found. He discovered nothing more, except the traces of a fire, which had been lighted in a very retired hollow on the side of one of the mountains; no trace of any human bones were discovered in the ashes, or anything which could at all help to unravel the mystery. The only men with knapsacks, who had been met on the afternoon of the 3rd of September on the nearest road to Keswick, which anyone coming from Rannerdale would be most likely to take, were two—one an elderly man, apparently a respectable mechanic; the other, a young man, with clean-shaved face, who looked like a clerk. Neither of these two answered the description of the missing man. Charlie, I should have mentioned, had curly hair, and wore a moustache and small curling whiskers, of which he was not a little proud. Mr. William Heathorp was, as may well be imagined, in a state of no little anxiety. Although Charlie had not been a favourite with his relations, still the horrible idea that he had been murdered made the whole family very uncomfortable. The very uncertainty as to his fate only increased Mr. Heathorp's disquietude; for, unless he could *prove* Charlie's death, he could not claim the property of which his brother had left him the reversion; so that, though parting with his money was by no means agreeable to Uncle William, when two weeks had passed without anything having been discovered as to his nephew's fate, he instructed the police to offer a reward of one hundred pounds "for any information that would lead to the discovery of the whereabouts, if alive, of Charles Heathorp, or of his body if dead."

He was partly moved to this act of unwonted liberality by the frequent letters, couched in very strong language, which he received from Miss Grattan, telling him that he ought to offer a reward. "Perhaps Charlie was hiding, poor boy! Afraid to return to a home where he was so cruelly treated, &c." Mr. Heathorp may have delayed taking this step towards ascertaining the fate of his nephew, in the hope that Miss Grattan might offer a reward herself. But that the old lady did not seem inclined to do; though, immediately the advertisement was out, she wrote to Uncle William to tell him that he was a "mean, stingy, old wretch," and that he "ought to have offered a reward at least double in amount."

Meanwhile, the end of September had come and gone, and "The Rannerdale Mystery," as it was called, remained a mystery still. Being the dull period of the year, there were several paragraphs in

the daily and weekly papers, in which all sorts of rumours as to evidence "that had been brought to light" were given. The usual number of clever people wrote letters, satisfactorily explaining the whole matter from their point of view; but their explanations, however ingenious, were not of the least help towards the solution of the mystery. Mr. Finder shook his head, and confessed that he could not make it out. Bob Keen, having been the most intimate friend of the missing young man, was in great request. He was invited to Scotland Yard two or three times, but could throw no light upon the question. He had been for his holiday alone in Scotland and the Isle of Man, and returned to the office just when the inquiries about poor Charlie Heathorp were being commenced in real earnest. Time passed; and, towards the end of the second week in October, Uncle William, who was worn to a shadow with anxiety, doubled the reward offered. Miss Grattan, on her part, had not been idle. Though she would not save Mr. Heathorp's purse by offering any reward herself, she had given Mr. Finder several refreshers; and it was mainly owing to her liberality that he was enabled to devote so much time to what, unfortunately, proved a fruitless task.

When people were really beginning to give up Charlie for dead, about the 25th of October a letter was received by the police, written from a street in Soho. The writer gave no name, but said that, *if no questions were asked*, he would give information which would lead to the discovery of the missing young man, who, he added, was not dead. A consultation was held between William Heathorp, Miss Grattan, and Mr. Finder; and it was ultimately determined, after a stormy discussion, to test the genuineness of this communication. Accordingly, on the 26th of October, Mr. Finder, accompanied by two police officers in plain clothes, went to the direction given; and there found, in an attic, a very shabby, elderly gentleman, who, having obtained from Mr. Finder a solemn promise that no questions would be asked if Charlie Heathorp was found alive and safe, and that the reward would be paid in full without any delay, gave him an address at a small village on the coast of Norfolk, which we will call Cliffside. There, sure enough, Charles Heathorp was found, alive, but looking pale and ill. It turned out that he had been under medical treatment, for some time, for a broken arm and other injuries. According to the account of the landlord of the house, on the 6th or 7th of September a middle-aged man, in spectacles, who looked like a foreigner, and spoke with a foreign accent, said that he wanted a room for a gentleman—an invalid, who wished to be very quiet. A room was engaged, and, on the next day, the foreigner returned with Charlie Heathorp, leaving himself that same evening. He had not been seen since. The rent had been regularly paid, but something was

owing for food and to the doctor. What had really occurred between the 3rd of September, the date on which Charlie Heathorp had been last seen at Rannerdale, and the time when he reached the little Norfolk village, Cliffside, remained a mystery. The reward was paid to the shabby old man, who gave the name of Timson, and about whom nothing was known, except that he had only been in that lodging two days, that no one visited him, that he kept his door locked always, taking the key with him when he went out, and no one had been allowed to enter his room. Mr. Finder, the next day, came himself to make some inquiries about him, at the request of Mr. William Heathorp, who was far from pleased at having to part with his money. The old man had gone away, no one knew whither. Thus ended "The Rannerdale Mystery," as far as the public were concerned.

Now for the key to that mystery, which two people only, Charlie and myself, have held for these many years.

I must go back to the 1st of August, 186-, the year in which Charles Heathorp disappeared. On that day two young men might have been seen coming out of the house of Ikey Moss, the well-known money-lender. Their faces expressed a singular mixture of satisfaction, tempered by anxiety. One of them, who had curly hair, light moustache and whiskers, exclaimed, with a sigh of relief, "Thank Heaven! That is settled!" These two young men had just renewed a bill at three months for £150, on account of which they had already paid something like five times the amount originally advanced upon that valuable security. Ikey had renewed now, as he declared, "for the last time;" and he was never known to break his word. They knew that if, in three months from that date, they could not meet the bill, he would proceed against them with all the rigour of the law. These two young men were Charlie Heathorp and Bob Keen.

"What I shall do when the cursed bill becomes due," said Charlie, "I don't know. It's no use going to my uncle. I dare not go to Miss Grattan. When she last paid my debts she declared that, if she ever found I put my name to a bill, I should have seen the last of her and her money. If I insure my life, and borrow on the security of what my father left me, I shall have to get two sureties, and I am sure I don't know where I am to find them. I tell you, Bob, I don't know what I shall do."

"Don't be downhearted, Charlie," answered Bob. "There's plenty of time yet before the 3rd of November; and who knows what may turn up? I will save as much as I can towards it, and you must save, too; and, perhaps, Ikey will relent."

"Will he?" said Charlie. "Yes; when London's paving-stones turn to butter!"

Just at this moment they happened to be passing a Police Station. Attracted by the staring announcement, "£150 Reward," Charlie stopped to read one of the many bills posted outside the station. "Missing, since the end of May last," &c.

"Ah!" said Charlie. "I wonder what reward they would offer for me, dead or alive, if I was missing?"

I give you my sacred word of honour, Mr. Editor, that this chance exclamation of Charlie's fired my inventive brain with the magnificent idea, which afterwards I carried out so successfully. Let it be remembered, in justice to Charlie and myself, that it was not as if he had had affectionate parents, on whom terrible mental suffering would have been inflicted by such a deception as we practised. In fact, I think nothing delighted me more, throughout the whole affair, than the idea of screwing some money out of Mr. William Heathorp's pocket.

Briefly, then, the design that I made and carried out was this:—First, to insure our having a little start before any inquiries could take place; it was arranged that Charlie should terminate his visit to the Monsons on some excuse which would not create any suspicion, and without acquainting his uncle or anyone else of his intention. Next, it was easy enough for me, going a walking tour alone in Scotland, to take the train to some little-frequented station near the Lake district, and to make my way over to Cockermouth on foot. I had provided every requisite for disguising myself; and, knowing thoroughly, as I did, the Lake district, I easily made my way by Wastwater and Ennerdale to Cockermouth. I purposely chose a path which tourists did not much frequent, and I changed myself into "a red-haired young man, with a limp," in a lonely spot where my only spectators were a few sheep and a stray corby-crow. When we reached the spot, on the morning of the 3rd of September, which I had already selected in my mind's eye as one in which we ran practically no risk of being observed, we proceeded as follows:—First, we tossed up who should give the other "a bloody nose." I won the toss, and, as Charlie was fortunately very prone to bleeding at the nose, he did not require a very severe blow to "tap his claret." We then proceeded to smear Charlie's clothes with blood, having first made in them "many grievous rents," and pulled the buttons off, as if they had been torn away in a violent struggle. Then we made them into a bundle, and sunk them in the tarn. After that we consoled ourselves with a very pleasant bathe. Next, with his razor, which he had in his knapsack, I proceeded to shave Charlie. In doing so, I accidentally cut him, which caused some more blood to flow. We then dressed ourselves in the disguises which we had in our knapsacks. I cut Charlie's curls off, so as to make his disguise more complete. There was nothing in the appearance of either of us to excite any

suspicion. Signs of the struggle by the tarn were easily made; of course, in a friendly wrestle. The razor and stick, both stained with blood, were thrown away in places where I thought they might easily be found, if a diligent search was made. After going a little further on our way, we lighted a fire, in which I burnt thoroughly my red wig, and Charlie's hair that I had cut off. We walked together till we reached the high road; then we separated, going into Keswick at different times, and stopping at different inns. From Keswick we made our way, separately, to a quiet town in Norfolk, where we had agreed to meet. There I assumed the disguise of "the foreign gentleman" who appeared subsequently on the scene. I chose the little village of Cliffside, where Charlie was found, as a place in which a person might easily hide himself without attracting any attention. We were driving over to Cliffside in a rough dogcart, when the unfortunate accident happened by which Charlie was really hurt. He broke his arm and otherwise injured himself in the fall. I got assistance, and carried him to a neighbouring farmhouse till I could go on and secure a lodging in Cliffside. We had saved up all the money we could between us, in order to carry out our plan, but Charlie's illness made it run rather short at the end. When the first reward was offered, as it was not enough to cover the bill we had to meet at the beginning of November, I advised Charlie to lie *perdu* a little longer. This was all the more necessary, as he had not yet recovered from the accident.

Of course, the old man in Soho was myself; and it was at this point in our scheme that the greatest difficulty arose. At my first interview with Mr. Finder, I could see that he suspected something; and, no doubt, had he been allowed any time for inquiry, he might have got upon the right scent; but Miss Grattan would not hear of any delay, and, although uncle William would gladly have tried everything he could to save his two hundred pounds, he was obliged to fork out. I insisted upon the reward being paid to me in the garret at Soho, because there I could avoid that close examination which might have detected my disguise. I knew very well that after I received the money I should be watched. As a fact, the police watched the house the whole of that night. I managed to escape, at a late hour, in my own dress; and I passed the officers in plain clothes, without exciting their suspicion.* When Finder himself came to make further inquiries the old man had disappeared. There, then, is a simple explanation of "The Rannerdale Mystery." I can-

* We have very much condensed Mr. Robert Keen's explanation of the successful trick which he invented and practised. That a man approaching forty years old should so glory in his successful deception does not, in our opinion, reflect much credit on Mr. R. K.'s character.

not say to other young men in difficulties "Go and do likewise," for there are very few cases in which—supposing anyone else to have the brains to carry out such a plan—it would be successful.

I said the secret was known only to Charlie and myself. I should have added, to one other person, namely, Miss Grattan. She pressed Charlie so much to tell her of what really happened, and the reason for his playing so strange a trick, that I advised him, in his own interest, to be frank with her. I was quite right. She was so immensely tickled at the idea of our having got £200 out of stingy Uncle William, that she forgave Charlie for having "put his name to a bill," and presented him with a cheque for £100. She also complimented me most highly upon my ingenuity, making me, at the same time, a very handsome present. She died some ten years ago; and Charlie succeeded to the whole of her fortune. Uncle William, too, is dead. I do not think he ever forgave Charlie for his "escapade," as he called it; and he always assigned the very worst motives for his nephew's having so long concealed himself. Charlie, however, has behaved very handsomely to his cousins; and for that reason, probably, when they read this account, they will forgive the deception which he practised.

R. K.



The Under-study's Revenge.

By HENRY PETTITT.

WHILE on my visiting rounds I often met him in the winter mornings walking up and down the colonnade that flanked the theatre, apparently keeping aloof from the mixed crowd of eccentric-looking people that may be generally seen waiting outside the stage-door, and through being acquainted with some of the other actors in the theatre I became acquainted with him.

He was a tall, spare man, with dark restless eyes, iron-grey hair, and a face that would have been handsome but for the chin, which was weak and receding, and which he had a constant habit of rubbing with his open hand, as though engaged in a vain attempt to drag it forward. He usually looked sad and thoughtful, except when exchanging greetings or talking with his *confrères* of the theatre, when his face would light up with a singular expression of mingled kindness and drollery.

It was but a flash, transient as a ripple, and then the old sad look of abstraction would return, as he resumed his walk. Sometimes

he would be accompanied by a child, a very beautiful, fairy-like little girl of about seven years of age, who would walk beside him with great pride and satisfaction, chatting and laughing to the evident pleasure of her companion, who would hold her hand and bend over her with an inexpressible look of affection.

It is well known that there are no greater supporters and admirers of dramatic art in this country than the members of the medical profession, and I am no exception to the general rule. Whenever I can spare an evening away from the arduous labours of an extensive and varied practice I invariably spend it at the theatre, and it was with an unusual amount of interest that I found myself one night witnessing a remarkably careful and painstaking performance of a very responsible character, by my acquaintance of the colonnade, in a drama that was being played at the Theatre Royal. My interest, however, was considerably increased when the child entered also, and, in a character requiring great intelligence and natural gifts, showed herself to be in possession of histrionic powers that in one so young were little short of absolute genius.

At the conclusion of the play she was enthusiastically recalled before the curtain, and I was leaving the theatre profoundly impressed with the singular powers possessed by one so young, and thinking how unfortunate it was that their premature exhibition in public would in all probability lead to their early decay, when I was touched upon the shoulder, and, turning, discovered my tall acquaintance, who hurriedly and excitedly asked me if I would be kind enough to step round to the stage door and see his little girl, who had fainted at the end of the performance.

I found my patient lying on a sofa in the Green-Room, and evidently in a high state of fever. Her immediate removal from the theatre was, of course, imperative, and as her home was but a few streets off, her father, as I judged him to be, wrapped her carefully up in his ulster coat and carried her in his arms. When we reached their home we were received by an exceedingly kind and motherly landlady, who did everything in her power for the sick child's comfort, and when I left the house that night I felt sure that my new patient could not be in better hands.

The case proved an exceedingly long and dangerous one, and the Christmas snow lay thick and heavy on the ground when the crisis came, and a few short hours were to decide whether the child was to live or die. The necessities of my profession daily bring me into contact with scenes of suffering and sorrow, but never in my life have I seen such a picture of trembling anxiety as the father presented, as he nervously seized my arm and asked me in an almost inaudible voice if there was any hope, and I have seldom experienced

a keener sense of pleasure than I did when, a few hours later, I took him by the hand and told him that the danger was passed and that the child would live.

I will not repeat his expressions of gratitude. I told him that youth rather than science had contributed to the patient's recovery, and entreated him, for the child's sake, to keep her off the stage for a few years, until her constitution was better able to stand fatigue, and her powers were more matured.

"It was against my wish she played at all," he replied, as he led the way to the sitting-room, and closed the door. "But when I was entreated by everyone to let her appear, and she herself tried so hard to persuade me, I had not the strength of mind to refuse. But never, never again," he continued with energy. "It is impossible to prevent her acting; that with her is a second nature. Many a Siddons or a Ristori has been lost to the world when a child actress has died from over-work, and she shall not go upon the stage until she is older and strong enough, and then, doctor, there will be a career before her, for, like her father, the child has genius."

"Like her father," I repeated, with a smile.

"Yes," he answered. "She is only my daughter by adoption. But if she were my own flesh and blood I could not love her more dearly. I did her father a cruel wrong, and my sufferings of the last few weeks were only part of my punishment. Ah, it is a secret I have borne in silence for seven long years; but to-night, when I learn from your lips that my darling's life is safe, when I know that I owe that life to you, I feel an irresistible impulse to relieve my mind of its burden. Will you listen to me?"

It was Christmas eve. I had visited my last patient, and my time was my own. Outside I could hear the bitter eastwind driving the sleet and snow against the window panes as I seated myself in a chair by the fire, and my host in the dimly lamp-lit room, in a hushed voice, so that it should not reach the patient through the folding doors, told me the story of his crime.

"Her father, Tom Lynton, and I, were boys together. He was the younger son of a country clergyman, and my father was a doctor in the neighbouring town. As boys we were what is generally known as stage-struck, and when young men we left home and started together as utility actors in a small country company. From the first, however, fortune seemed dead against me, and entirely in Tom's favour. At that time I thought it was mere chance, but looking back as I do now, in a more impartial spirit, I can see that his constant recurring successes, and my monotonous series of failures, were merely the result of one simple difference between us, namely, he was a good actor and I was not. At that time, however, I held different opinions,

and as I felt it very difficult to hide the bitterness of my disappointment at times when I saw him steadily and surely climbing up the dramatic ladder, while I still remained immovable, I resolved to part from him, and seek my fortune elsewhere.

"I did not meet him again for some years, although I was constantly reading of his successes in the theatrical newspapers; but when parted from him my jealousy seemed to slumber, and I devoted myself heart and soul to the study of my profession. Slowly but surely I improved; and at length my reputation as an earnest and painstaking actor secured for me an engagement in the actors' Mecca—London.

"Only actors who have drudged and suffered in the country, who have gone through the mill, and been crushed, ground, and sifted, can understand or appreciate the thrill of joy that runs through an actor's heart when he gets his first London engagement. My joy was intense, my hopes boundless, as I read the manager's letter accompanying the engagement, and learnt that I was cast for a part specially suited to my peculiar style. I was requested to attend the reading of the new drama the following day.

"At last my chance had come, at last I was free from the wearying thought that Tom Lynton had left me far behind in the race. I had reached London first. My hour of triumph had come, and when I arrived in London the following morning, and drove to the theatre through the noisy, crowded streets, I would not have exchanged the damp and foggy atmosphere that nearly choked me, for the softest, sweetest country breeze that ever blew. Proud and happy, I passed the stage-door, walked into the green-room, and the first person who held out his hand to welcome me was Tom Lynton.

"He had scarcely time to tell me in his quick, impulsive manner that he was now married to the prettiest and best wife that ever blest a man, that he had saved money, furnished a house, had just signed a year's engagement, that he was happy and hopeful, and on the high road to fame and fortune, when the author and manager entered the room, and the reading commenced.

"From the moment I saw Tom my heart seemed to die within me, and a sense of impending misfortune, that I tried in vain to shake off, seized upon me. I felt that my small, pale star was to be once more obscured, and that the old fate was to follow me to the end.

"No parts were given out, and we were left to conjecture the cast. The author, like many others of his craft, did all he could to mar the effect of his play by reading it himself as badly as it could be read, and by attempting to convey to the company various conceptions of the characters, that would have ruined the play had they been followed, while the company listened with a kind of spasmodic interest,

inwardly wondering why the man who had brains enough to write a play had not sense enough to get someone better qualified to read it for him.

"There was one part in the drama similar to the one the manager had seen me play in the country, a strongly pronounced character, full of life and go, and one likely to create a profound impression, and make the reputation of the actor who played it; and my hopes had once more revived, and my spirits returned when I reflected that the part must have been written specially for me, and that my great chance had come at last. When the reading ended, we were asked to come upon the stage and compare parts, which were then handed round to the ladies and gentlemen. To my surprise, I did not receive one, and I was about to speak to the manager, when he saved me the trouble by calling me to him and saying—'Mr. Pope, I am sorry to say the part we intended for you has been cut out of the play, but as you are engaged to us for the season, we will utilize your services as under-study.'

"My heart stood still for a moment, and I gazed at him in speechless despair. I turned away to hide the tears that sprang into my eyes as I drained the full measure of my misery, and learnt that the part I had set my heart upon was given to Tom Lynton, and that I was to be his under-study.

"The blow was overwhelming. Only actors and those who have lived among them can appreciate the bitterness of such a blow. I turned sick, and, unable to speak, walked away lest any one should see the anguish I was suffering.

"To you, sir, the disappointment may appear a slight one. Any actor will tell you it was a crushing blow, and for days I scarcely ate or slept. In the meantime the rehearsals were progressing, and I had to be in attendance every day.

Ah! sir, in any walk of life is there any fate more wretched and maddening than that of the under-study—to live in the shadow of another man, to hear from his lips the words that should come from yours, to know that the praise he gains, the fame he wins, should be yours. It has driven many a poor fellow to the verge of madness; and made many a man at heart a murderer, as he has watched at the wings and seen another in the place that should be his.

"At this time the keenness of my disappointment and the bitterness of my feelings against Tom Lynton—who was perfectly ignorant of the injury he had done me—must have unsettled my reason. At any rate, I have hoped and prayed that it was so, and I began to seek distraction in drink.

"One day Tom noticed my condition, and tried to save me from the



MISS VIOLET CAMERON AS SQUIRE THORNHILL IN
"THE VICAR OF WIDEAWAKEFIELD."

ruin that was too surely coming by inviting me home to his house ; but the sight of his comfortable home, his charming wife, and too evident domestic happiness only intensified my feeling of envy, and I hated him worse than ever, and that night, when half-stupefied by the drink I had taken, an idea came into my bemuddled mind which I vainly endeavoured to drive away. Try as I would to dismiss the treacherous thought, it would return, and, in spite of myself, take shape and form.

"I have told you that my father was a doctor. I myself had been intended by him for the same profession, and had some knowledge of the pharma. When restless and sleepless, I had been in the habit of taking anodynes. I thoroughly understood their nature, and by their skilful use I saw the means, not only of revenging myself upon Tom for always standing in my light, but of preventing him from acting on the first night, and thus securing the chance I had so long and eagerly hoped for.

"There was little time for thought. The day of the last rehearsal had arrived, and during one of the waits Tom and I had adjourned to a neighbouring hostelry, at my invitation, for some luncheon. Before leaving me he had some black coffee, and, at my request, some brandy in it, and when we rose and returned to the theatre I had committed an act of detestable treachery, and had, as I believed, taken a sure and terrible revenge for having been made his understudy.

"*I had watched my opportunity*, AND I KNEW TOM LYNTON WOULD NOT ACT THAT NIGHT.

"*I had succeeded in drugging his coffee !*

"When the rehearsal was dismissed, Tom complained of his head, and in his half-dazed condition was easily persuaded to break through his usual rule and have an extra drink or two, and when at last he took a cab to drive home, I felt sure he would not be able to leave it again that night.

"My path now lay clear before me. The opportunity that comes at least once in a man's life had come to me. I was in too high a state of nervous tension to go home and rest ; I was too excited to eat ; and I wandered about the precincts of the theatre fortifying myself with an occasional drink, and mentally running through my part, until it was time to go into the theatre, according to the usual custom of the under-study, to know if I was wanted.

"I was standing at the prompt entrance when the overture was rung in, listening to the murmur of the gathering audience, when I heard voices behind me, and, among them, one that made my heart beat faster. I turned and saw Tom Lynton, who, by a superhuman effort, had been kept in a state of partial consciousness by his wife,

and brought down to the theatre. He was leaning upon her arm, and, with bloodshot eyes and a face whiter than death, was denying, in a husky and tremulous voice, the angry and indignant accusation that he was hopelessly drunk.

"Even at this distance of time, the memory of the scene is too painful for me to dwell upon. Despite his protestations, Tom Lynton was ordered to leave the theatre, and I was told by the stage-manager to dress and go on for the part.

"I rushed to the dressing-room and dressed with a feverish eagerness strangely at variance with my usual habits. Even then I had some dim idea, some vague fear, that something might happen to prevent my appearance, and I stood ready at the wings, as the manager went before the curtain and announced that in consequence of regrettable circumstances Mr. Lynton could not appear, and that his part would be played by Mr. Pope, who would make his first appearance before a metropolitan audience. The orchestra played the opening music incidental to the drama, the curtain rose, and I realised that my hour had come at last.

"In a few moments during which I baffled hard with the nervousness and the deadly, sickening sinking of the heart that I found creeping over me, the cue was given, and I rushed upon the stage. I saw before me a mass of human faces, around me the characters to whom I had to speak, and then, overcome by the prolonged excitement of the day, weakened by the want of food, stupefied by the drink, my limbs trembled as with a palsy, the scene swam before my bewildered eyes, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and, utterly incapable and demoralised, I broke down and ignominiously and completely failed.

"That night I drowned my shame and remorse in drink, and the next day I had not the courage to go to the theatre. I wrote to the manager, and by mutual consent my engagement was cancelled. I returned to the provinces, and for two years tried to destroy my identity, and forget my disgrace in the hard work inseparable from the fifth rate theatres. It was in vain, however; despair and remorse were driving me nearer and nearer to ruin, and rendering me more helplessly in the clutches of the demon drink. I was sinking day by day deeper and deeper into degradation, when one day a telegram was brought to me from Lynton. 'Come to me at once, I am dying.'

"It had been sent from a neighbouring town, and in a few hours I was by his bedside, and never shall I forget my feelings, when I contrasted the squalid lodgings and his desolate surroundings with the comfortable and happy home in which he had first welcomed me.

"His story was a sad one. The manager had dismissed him for

drunkenness, and his reputation among the London managers was ruined. He had to sell his home, just when it was most needed, for his wife had given birth to a child, and he had to seek a livelihood once more in the country. His wife soon succumbed to the hardships of a nomadic life, and he himself had caught a severe attack of rheumatic fever, which had left behind it the fell destroyer, consumption, and there, helpless, penniless, and friendless, among strangers, he lay awaiting the last summons.

"By his side lay a sleeping child, and when he had finished telling me all, he kissed her and lay back among the pillows, and I saw that the end was near. There was no light in the room but the red glow of the dying fire; there was no sound but the gentle breathing of the sleeping child as I knelt by the bedside of the dying friend I had betrayed, and, holding my hand in his, he whispered the words that shamed me heart and soul, and made me pray that I might show my penitence and die for him.

"I cannot tell you all that passed at that last meeting. May Heaven forgive me as freely as he did, and give me strength to keep the oath I took to be a second father to his motherless child. In a few hours his spirit had passed away, and my life of atonement had begun. It was a hard task at first to win the child's love and to cast off the curse of drink that beset me, but I never faltered in my duty, and as our love for each other grew, so hope, ambition, and the charm of life returned. She brought me a blessing, and, slowly and surely, I regained the position my own folly had lost me. And now, to live, and to work on to ensure her happiness as some atonement for the wrong I did her father, is the one single-hearted object of my life.

"My revenge upon the father brought me to ruin, and despair and my atonement to his child have brought me peace and hope."

The actor ceased, and in a few moments I left him with an assurance that with careful nursing the patient would speedily recover. In a few weeks, the season being over, they went to Brighton, and I lost sight of them for some years. A short time since, however, I went to see a new star actress, who had made a most successful appearance, and having a singular memory for faces, I instantly recognised my former patient, now grown into a lovely and accomplished woman, while in the elderly actor, who played an important character, and watched his pupil with such parental pride, as she received the congratulations of a brilliant and distinguished audience, I once more saw the man who had told me the story of the Under-study's Revenge.

A Promising Dramatist.

BY GEO. R. SIMS.

THE facts of the following story are known to myself, the chaplain of ——— Goal, and about half a dozen other persons, friends and relatives of the deceased.

You will gather from this that my hero is a dead man. He was hanged for a murder committed under singularly atrocious circumstances not many years ago.

Truth is stranger than fiction. No industrious manufacturer of shilling dreadfuls ever imagined a situation in which a man, ambitious for literary and dramatic success, would make his first hit as a playwright on the night before his execution, and read the laudatory criticisms in the condemned cell while waiting for the executioner.

Such was the fate of one whose identity I will conceal under the name of Percy Dornton. I make no apology for introducing his strange life story to the readers of the THEATRE ANNUAL. As he was a dramatist, his tragic fate must be worthy the attention of all who are interested in the shifting and varied scenes of theatrical life.

* * * * *

At the age of five and twenty Percy Dornton was friendless. His parents were dead, and he had worn his other relatives out by repeated applications for money, which was spent in cheap dissipation. With a certain rough and ready talent, a good address, and an insinuating manner, Dornton managed to impose himself upon a limited number of acquaintances as a clever fellow who only wanted a chance to get on in the world. He had been to America, and he boasted of his acquaintance with the famous literary men and the well-known actors of the States. He was on nodding terms with a few of the comedians and literary men who are to be found occasionally in the bars and smoking-rooms of the Strand. With these gentlemen he passed for one of the great unacted. He had written a comedy and a drama, which would undoubtedly be produced at once if he could only get an introduction to a manager. But no one would oblige. Most of the literary men who nodded to Dornton had a play of their own, which was being kept from the footlights by the dramatic ring, and the comedians were too used to similar requests to take any notice of this one.

After a year's knocking about the Strand and Fleet Street Dornton

disappeared. No one knew what had become of him, and no one took the trouble to enquire. Several of his former acquaintances had obliged him with a temporary loan of a few shillings, and it was presumed that having obtained all he could he kept out of the way to avoid being asked to return it.

As a matter of fact, Dornton was hard at work finishing his comedy, for the long-expected chance had come. A distant relative of his, an actor, had returned from America, and had obtained an engagement at a London theatre. Soon afterwards Dornton met him, and learnt that the management was in want of a comedy. The actor altered it a little here and there, bringing his practical experience to bear on the play, and then took it to the management as the work of Mr. ———, the *nom de théâtre* which Dornton had selected as the one he would make famous. For obvious reasons I refrain from revealing that name here.

The manager of the theatre took the play, promised to read it, and put it in his desk. There it lay unopened for many weeks, in company with a dozen other new and original comedies, the authors of which, like Dornton, only wanted "a chance" to set the Thames on fire and to don the mantle that fell from the shoulders of Sheridan, and which had remained so long locked up in the theatrical wardrobe.

Dornton imagined that his comedy would be accepted at once. He was eager to see the name of ——— in huge letters on the hoardings; he bought a book for newspaper cuttings, and prepared it to receive the criticisms of his *chef d'œuvre*. But days and weeks went on, and he heard nothing. He hunted his relative up every day, but could get no satisfactory answer; the management had promised to read it. The actor couldn't hold the management down in a chair and insist upon the promise being carried out. At last, Dornton abandoned all hope; looked upon his play as lost to sight, to memory dear, and determined to leave it a little longer and then get it back again.

In the meantime he wanted money. He was being pressed by an ugly creditor—a man who had lent him £10 in the joint name of himself and a householder, who had signed a promissory note as security. The signature was a forgery, and the creditor knew it.

One day, under circumstances which I shall not relate, because the details of the crime would enable the reader to identify the murderer, Dornton found himself alone with a gentleman who had money about him; the gentleman was asleep. A desperate idea flashed across the wretched fellow's brain that he could rob the gentleman and escape unnoticed. He made an attempt, but the gentleman awoke; there was a fierce struggle, cries for help, and then—murder!

Dornton, maddened by fear, silenced his victim and accuser at last, and fled, a murderer, from the scene of his crime.

* * * * *

For some time the crime remained a mystery. Dornton eluded the vigilance of the police, but at last he was captured; taken before a magistrate, and committed for trial.

One of his first visitors was his actor relative. Dornton entreated him to keep the secret of his being the writer of the comedy, but to endeavour to sell it to the management for a sum that would help him to obtain good legal assistance at the trial. The actor, by a superhuman effort, induced the manager to read the comedy; it was liked, accepted, and a sum paid down for it. This the actor handed to Dornton's friends, who had interested themselves in his defence. The trial came on, Dornton was found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged.

For some days then his play had been in rehearsal. The manager understood that the author was abroad, and could not be consulted about anything. That was the explanation of the actor who had brought the MS. to the theatre. On the night before the execution of Dornton his play was produced, and was a success.

The following morning the unhappy man made an unusual request. He earnestly begged to be allowed to see a morning paper. The request was granted, and they brought him a *Daily Telegraph*. He turned eagerly to the notice and read it through. This was the last sentence of an exceedingly favourable notice:—

“The comedy betrays now and again the touch of an inexperienced hand. The author is probably a young man; he will improve greatly upon this initial effort. In fact, looking at the excellence of the dialogue, and the cleverness of the characterisation, and the remarkable constructive skill displayed, it is not rash to prophesy that the young author of———has a brilliant career before him.”

Dornton read the words slowly aloud. For a moment his lip trembled, then he recovered his self-possession, put the paper aside, and turned to the Chaplain, who was waiting to administer to him the consolations of religion.

Half-an-hour afterwards the Black Flag was hoisted on the prison roof, and the young dramatic author with “a brilliant career before him,” had paid the penalty of his crime.



Our New House.

BY BRAM STOKER.

WE spoke of it as our New House simply because we thought of it as such and not from any claim to the title, for it was just about as old and as ricketty as a house supposed to be habitable could well be. It was only new to us. Indeed with the exception of the house there was nothing new about us. Neither my wife nor myself was, in any sense of the word, old, and we were still, comparatively speaking, new to each other.

It had been my habit, for the few years I had been in Somerset House, to take my holidays at Littlehampton, partly because I liked the place, and partly—and chiefly, because it was cheap. I used to have lodgings in the house of a widow, Mrs. Compton, in a quiet street off the sea frontage. I had this year, on my summer holiday, met there my fate in the person of Mrs. Compton's daughter Mary, just home from school. I returned to London engaged. There was no reason why we should wait, for I had few friends and no near relatives living, and Mary had the consent of her mother. I was told that her father, who was a merchant captain, had gone to sea shortly after her birth, but had never been heard of since, and had consequently been long ago reckoned as "with the majority." I never met any of my new relatives; indeed, there was not the family opportunity afforded by marriage under conventional social conditions. We were married in the early morning at the church at Littlehampton, and, without any formal wedding breakfast, came straight away in the train. As I had to attend to my duties at Somerset House, the preliminaries were all arranged by Mrs. Compton at Littlehampton, and Mary gave the required notice of residency. We were all in a hurry to be off, as we feared missing the train; indeed, whilst Mary was signing the registry I was settling the fees and tipping the verger.

When we began to look about for a house, we settled on one which was vacant in a small street near Sloane Square. There was absolutely nothing to recommend the place except the smallness of the rent—but this was everything to us. The landlord, Mr. Gradder, was the very hardest man I ever came across. He did not even go through the form of civility in his dealing.

"There is the house," he said, "and you can either take it or leave it. I have painted the outside, and you must paint the inside. Or,

if you like it as it is, you can have it so; only you must paint and paper it before you give it up to me again—be it in one year or more.”

I was pretty much of a handy man, and felt equal to doing the work myself; so, having looked over the place carefully, we determined to take it. It was, however, in such a terribly neglected condition that I could not help asking 'my ironclad lessor as to who had been the former tenant, and what kind of person he had been to have been content with such a dwelling.

His answer was vague. “Who he was I don't know. I never knew more than his name. He was a regular oddity. Had this house and another of mine near here, and used to live in them both, and all by himself. Think he was afraid of being murdered or robbed. Never knew which he was in. Dead lately. Had to bury him—worse luck. Expenses swallowed up value of all he'd got.”

We signed an agreement to take out a lease, and when, in a few days, I had put in order two rooms and a kitchen, my wife and I moved in. I worked hard every morning before I went to my office, and every evening after I got home, so I got the place in a couple of weeks in a state of comparative order. We had, in fact, arrived so far on our way to perfection that we had seriously begun to consider dispensing with the services of our charwoman and getting a regular servant.

One evening my landlord called on me. It was about nine o'clock, and, as our temporary servant had gone home, I opened the door myself. I was somewhat astonished at recognising my visitor, and not a little alarmed, for he was so brutally simple in dealing with me that I rather dreaded any kind of interview. To my astonishment he began to speak in what he evidently meant for a hearty manner.

“Well, how are you getting on with your touching up?”

“Pretty well,” I answered, “but ‘touching up’ is rather a queer name for it. Why, the place was like an old ash heap. The very walls seemed pulled about.”

“Indeed!” he said quickly.

I went on, “It is getting into something like order, however. There is only one more room to do, and then we shall be all right.”

“Do you know,” he said, “that I have been thinking it is hardly fair that you should have to do all this yourself.”

I must say that I was astonished as well as pleased, and found myself forming a resolution not to condemn ever again anyone for hardness until I had come to know something about his real nature. I felt somewhat guilty as I answered, “You are very kind, Mr. Gradder. I shall let you know what it all costs me, and then you can repay me a part as you think fair.”



MR. WILSON BARRETT AS JACK YEULETT IN
"HOODMAN BLIND."

"Oh, I don't mean that at all." This was said very quickly.

"Then what do you mean," I asked.

"That I should do some of it in my own way, at my own cost."

I did not feel at all inclined to have either Mr. Gradder or strange workmen in the house. Moreover, my pride rebelled at the thought that I should be seen by real workmen doing labourers' work—I suppose there is something of the spirit of snobbery in all of us. So I told him I could not think of such a thing; that all was going on very well; and more to the same effect. He seemed more irritated than the occasion warranted. Indeed, it struck me as odd that a man should be annoyed at his generous impulse being thwarted. He tried, with a struggle for calmness, to persuade me, but I did not like the controversy, and stood to my refusal of assistance. He went away in a positive fury of suppressed rage.

The next evening he called in to see me. Mary had, after he had gone, asked me not to allow him to assist, as she did not like him; so when he came in I refused again with what urbanity I could. Mary kept nudging me to be firm, and he could not help noticing it. He said: "Of course, if your wife objects"—and stopped. He spoke the words very rudely, and Mary spoke out:

"She does object, Mr. Gradder. We are all right, thank you, and do not want help from any one."

For reply Mr. Gradder put on his hat, knocked it down on his head firmly and viciously, and walked out, banging the door behind him.

"There is a nice specimen of a philanthropist," said Mary, and we both laughed.

The next day, while I was in my office, Mr. Gradder called to see me. He was in a very amiable mood, and commenced by apologising for what he called "his unruly exit." "I am afraid you must have thought me rude," he said.

As the nearest approach to mendacity I could allow myself, was the *suppressio veri*, I was silent.

"You see," he went on, "your wife dislikes me, and that annoys me; so I just called to see you alone, and try if we could arrange this matter—we men alone."

"What matter?" I asked.

"You know—about the doing up those rooms."

I began to get annoyed myself, for there was evidently some underlying motive of advantage to himself in his persistence. Any shadowy belief I had ever entertained as to a benevolent idea had long ago vanished and left not a wrack behind. I told him promptly and briefly that I would not do as he desired, and that I did not care to enter any further upon the matter. He again made an "unruly exit."

This time he nearly swept away in his violence a young man who was entering through the swing door, to get some papers stamped. The youth remonstrated with that satirical force which is characteristic of the lawyer's clerk. Mr. Gradder was too enraged to stop to listen, and the young man entered the room grumbling and looking back at him.

"Old brute!" he said. "I know him. Next time I see him I'll advise him to buy some manners with his new fortune."

"His new fortune?" I asked, naturally interested about him. "How do you mean, Wigley?"

"Lucky old brute! I wish I had a share of it. I heard all about it at Doctors Commons yesterday."

"Why, is it anything strange?"

"Strange! Why, it's no name for it. What do you think of an old flint like that having a miser for a tenant who goes and dies and leaves him all he's got—£40,000 or £50,000—in a will, providing a child of his own doesn't turn up to claim it.

"He died recently, then?"

"About three or four weeks ago. Old Gradder only found the will a few days since. He had been finding pots of gold and bundles of notes all over the house, and it was like drawing a tooth from him to make an inventory, as he had to do under a clause of the will. The old thief would have pocketed all the coin without a word, only for the will, and he was afraid he'd risk everything if he did not do it legally.

"You know all about it," I remarked, wishing to hear more.

"I should think I did. I asked Cripps, of Bogg and Snagleys, about it this morning. They're working for him, and Cripps says that if they had not threatened him with the Public Prosecutor, he would not have given even a list of the money he found."

I began now to understand the motive of Mr. Gradder's anxiety to aid in working at my house. I said to Wigley:

"This is very interesting. Do you know that he is my landlord?"

"Your landlord! Well, I wish you joy of him. I must be off now. I have to go down to Doctors Commons before one o'clock. Would you mind getting these stamped for me, and keeping them till I come back?"

"With pleasure," I said, "and look here! Would you mind looking out that will of Gradder's, and make a mem. of it for me, if it isn't too long? I'll go a shilling on it." And I handed him the coin.

Later in the day he came back and handed me a paper.

"It isn't long," he said. "We might put up the shutters if men made wills like that. That is an exact copy. It is duly witnessed, and all regular."

I took the paper and put it in my pocket, for I was very busy at the time.

After supper that evening I got a note from Gradder, saying that he had got an offer from another person who had been in treaty with him before I had taken the house, wanting to have it, and offering to pay a premium. "He is an old friend," wrote Gradder, "and I would like to oblige him; so if you choose I will take back the lease and hand you over what he offers to pay." This was £25, altered from £20.

I then told Mary of his having called on me at the office, and of the subsequent revelation of the will. She was much impressed.

"Oh, Bob," she said, "it is a real romance."

With a woman's quickness of perception, she guessed at once our landlord's reason for wishing to help us.

"Why, he thinks the old miser has hidden money here; and wants to look for it. Bob," this excitedly, "this house may be full of money; the walls round us may hold a fortune. Let us begin to look at once!"

I was as much excited as she was, but I felt that someone must keep cool, so I said:

"Mary, dear, there may be nothing; but even if there is, it does not belong to us."

"Why not?" she asked.

"Because it is all arranged in the will," I answered; "and, by the bye, I have a mem. of it here," and I took from my pocket the paper which Wigley had given me.

With intense interest we read it together, Mary holding me tightly by the arm. It certainly was short. It ran as follows:

"7, Little Butler Street, S.W., London.—I hereby leave to my child or children, if I have any living, all I own, and in default of such everything is to go to John Gradder, my landlord, who is to make an inventory of all he can find in the two houses occupied by me, this house and 2, Lampeter Street, S.W. London, and to lodge all money and securities in Coutts's Bank. If my children or any of them do not claim in writing by an application before a Justice of the Peace within one calendar month from my decease, they are to forfeit all rights. Ignorance of my death or their relationship to be no reason for noncompliance. Lest there be any doubt of my intentions, I hereby declare that I wish in such default of my natural heirs John Gradder aforesaid to have my property, because he is the hardest-hearted man I ever knew, and will not fool it away in charities or otherwise, but keep it together. If any fooling is to be done, it will be by my own. (Signed) GILES ARMER, Master Mariner,

"Formerly of Whitby."

When I came near the end, Mary, who had been looking down the paper in advance of my reading, cried out "Giles Armer! Why, that was my father!"

"Good God!" I cried out, as I jumped to my feet.

"Yes," she said, excitedly; "didn't you see me sign Mary Armer at the registry? We never spoke of the name because he had a quarrel with mother and deserted her, and after seven years she married my step-father, and I was always called by his name."

"And was he from Whitby?" I asked. I was nearly wild with excitement.

"Yes," said Mary. "Mother was married there, and I was born there."

I was reading over the will again. My hands were trembling so that I could hardly read. An awful thought struck me. What day did he die? Perhaps it was too late—it was now the thirtieth of October. However, we were determined to be on the safe side, and then and there Mary and I put on our hats and wraps and went to the nearest police-station.

There we learned the address of a magistrate, after we had explained to the inspector the urgency of the case.

We went to the address given, and after some delay were admitted to an interview.

The Magistrate was at first somewhat crusty at being disturbed at such an hour, for by this time it was pretty late in the evening. However, when we had explained matters to him he was greatly interested, and we went through the necessary formalities. When it was done he ordered in cake and wine, and wished us both luck. "But remember," he said to Mary, "that as yet your possible fortune is a long way off. There may be more Giles Armers than one, and moreover there may be some difficulty in proving legally that the dead man was the same person as your father. Then you will also have to prove, in a formal way, your mother's marriage and your own birth. This will probably involve heavy expenses, for lawyers fight hard when they are well paid. However, I do not wish to discourage you, but only to prevent false hopes; at any rate, you have done well in making your Declaration at once. So far you are on the high road to success." So he sent us away filled with hopes as well as fears.

When we got home we set to work to look for hidden treasures in the unfinished room. I knew too well that there was nothing hidden in the rooms which were finished, for I had done the work myself, and had even stripped the walls and uncovered the floors.

It took us a couple of hours to make an accurate search, but there

was absolutely no result. The late Master Mariner had made his treasury in the other house.

Next morning I went to find out from the parish registry the date of the death of Giles Armer, and to my intense relief and joy learned that it had occurred on the 30th of September, so that by our prompt action in going at once to the magistrate's, we had, if not secured a fortune, at least, not forfeited our rights or allowed them to lapse.

The incident was a sort of good omen, and cheered us up; and we needed a little cheering, for, despite the possible good fortune, we feared we might have to contest a lawsuit, a luxury which we could not afford.

We determined to keep our own counsel for a little, and did not mention the matter to a soul.

That evening Mr. Gradder called again, and renewed his offer of taking the house off my hands. I still refused, for I did not wish him to see any difference in my demeanour. He evidently came determined to effect a surrender of the lease, and kept bidding higher and higher, till at last I thought it best to let him have his way; and so we agreed for no less a sum than a hundred pounds that I should give him immediate possession and cancel the agreement. I told him we would clear out within one hour after the money was handed to me.

Next morning at half-past nine o'clock he came with the money. I had all our effects—they were not many—packed up and taken to a new lodging, and before ten o'clock Mr. Gradder was in possession of the premises.

Whilst he was tearing down my new wall papers, and pulling out the grates, and sticking his head up the chimneys and down the water tanks in the search for more treasures, Mary and I were consulting the eminent solicitor, Mr. George, as to our method of procedure. He said he would not lose an hour, but go by the first train to Littlehampton himself to examine Mrs. Compton as to dates and places.

Mary and I went with him. In the course of the next twenty-four hours he had, by various documents and the recollections of my mother-in-law, made out a clear case, the details of which only wanted formal verification.

We all came back to London jubilant, and were engaged on a high tea when there came a loud knocking at the door. There was a noise and scuffle in the passage, and into the room rushed Mr. Gradder, covered with soot and lime dust, with hair dishevelled and eyes wild with anger, and haggard with want of sleep. He burst out at me in a torrent of invective.

"Give me back my money, you thief! You ransacked the house yourself, and have taken it all away! My money, do you hear? *my* money!" He grew positively speechless with rage, and almost foamed at the mouth.

I took Mary by the hand and led her up to him.

"Mr. Gradder," I said, "let us both thank you. Only for your hurry and persistency we might have let the time lapse, and have omitted the declaration which, on the evening before last, we, or rather, she, made.

He started as though struck.

"What declaration? What do you mean?"

"The declaration made by my wife, only daughter of Giles Armer, Master Mariner, late of Whitby."



The Stoops to Conquer.

BY J. L. TOOLE.

THE most delightful experience of my provincial tour this season occurred while I was playing a two nights' engagement at the Gaiety Theatre, West Hartlepool, a prosperous town on the Durham coast. It was a bright, summer morning, and the sea, as smooth as the proverbial glass, was so calm and beautiful that I unconsciously commenced to repeat Barry Cornwall's lovely poem as I gazed abstractedly across the North Sea. I had hardly murmured:

"The sea, the sea, the open sea!
The blue, the fresh, the ever free!"

when an acquaintance interrupted my musing. He informed me that it was a pleasant walk along the silver sands to Seaton Carew, an old-fashioned village about a mile distant.

As the sands were only occupied by a few, very few, chubby-faced children, still fewer grown-up people, myself included, I determined to make the excursion, and, thanking my informant for his advice, I set out sturdily for Seaton Carew.

There being no chance for a conversation, I endeavoured to while away the time by looking over my part in the new play with which I intend to open my London season in December, as I providentially had the copy in my pocket. So that, what between looking over my part and the sea at the same time, the walk passed pleasantly enough.

I had almost reached my journey's end when I met some of the gentlemen of my company, who like myself, had been attracted by the good reports of the village which we were about to enter.

Like myself, too, they were somewhat fatigued by the walk, and were lamenting that so pretty a place did not possess some hospitable place wherein to rest weary limbs and refresh the inner man.

Casting around for an hotel I soon espied a manorial looking establishment surrounded by a most luxurious garden laid out in exquisite taste.

"The very place," I remarked. "If I had only known of this before I certainly would have taken rooms here during my engagement at West Hartlepool. However, it's no use lamenting over the inevitable. I'll see if I cannot get rooms here for to-night, at least."

So saying, and leaving my companions to await my return, I confidently passed through the open gate, through the sweet-smelling garden, and so into the hall. A trim servant answered my summons and gazed in astonishment in reply to my enquiry for good beds. She eyed me from head to foot, making me feel quite nervous, and remained in dumb astonishment for at least sixty seconds before she answered my enquiry.

"Beds," she echoed, "you can't have beds here!"

"Why not," I replied, "is the hotel so full?"

"It's private," she gasped.

Understanding her to mean that it was a private hotel, I explained that all we required was a little plain cooking and a clean room or two with, of course, a view of the sea.

But the more I explained our modest requirements the more puzzled did the servant become, and it was some time before she made me clearly understand that the house was not a hotel at all but a private family residence. Hastily apologising for my mistake, I retreated with due haste and informed my companions of the lamentable error on my part.

We had scarcely gone fifty yards from the house when the servant ran after us, and begged us, as well as her want of breath would allow her, to return to her master's house. It was in vain that I urged that I understood my mistake, and apologised for it, but the more I apologised the more the girl implored me to return.

"Missus will be so angry if you don't, sir," she pleaded, so that I and my fellow artists had no option but to follow her back to the house. It was an awkward predicament.

We were met on the hall steps by a cheery gentleman who greeted me in the heartiest manner possible.

"Well, my dear Mr. Toole," he said, "this is a pleasant surprise. Welcome to my house. Pray step in and bring your friends. To

think of my having seen you act so frequently and never having met you until now. So unexpectedly, too. Delighted, I'm sure. But let me introduce you to my family."

Leading us to the drawing-room he introduced us to his wife and daughters when, having explained away my mistake in thinking the house an hotel (at which our host and his family laughed good-humouredly), we entered into pleasant converse. Luncheon was soon prepared for us, and our excellent host, his good wife, and his charming daughters, one and all, united in making us spend the afternoon most pleasantly. As the time for appearing at the theatre drew near the carriage and pair were ordered, and, loaded with baskets of fruit and flowers for the ladies of my company, we departed amidst the good wishes of our newly-found friends. Thus passed one of the most delightful of my experiences, and thus happily ended "the Mistakes of a Night," no, I beg Dr. Goldsmith's pardon, I should say—"the Mistake of a Day."



Judge Lynch.

BY CHARLES WYNDHAM.

IT was a strange experience that greeted me at the end of my hurried rush to the West last July, when I found myself immediately on my arrival in the presence of that modern inquisition, Judge Lynch. An act had been perpetrated which in our settled communities was murder; there, by the mere friction of terms, it rose to a certain rude dignity as a vindication of the law—Lynch Law.

The scene was a novel one—to me positively startling, and in all the details of its history of a nature to remain ever in my memory.

I was attracted the first morning of my arrival in Laramie city by a crowd outside of a little undertaker's shop, and only too willing to welcome any ripple in the monotony of life as ordered in the "Gem of the Rockies." I pressed forward to learn the cause of the excitement. I was soon borne along by the crowd, and, thanks to the glorious freedom of the sovereign citizen, was shouldered through



MISS EASTLAKE AS NANCE YEULETT IN "HOODMAN BLIND."

the doorway into the little shop, past threatening-looking piles of planks, past two or three empty coffins upreared on end like sentry-boxes, and which afforded profitable openings for the display of modern wit, past other planks out of the little shop into a small apartment at the back.

Here the crowd was thicker, and the wit seemed to grow brighter by attrition. And what a crowd! A mixture to be found only on a trans-continental route. Here the light complexioned Englishman, as personified by Lord de Clifford and half-a-dozen brother sportsmen; there the swarthy Spaniard; by his side, again, a dandy of Laramie City, and he in turn elbowed by the bespattered cow-boys, redolent of the plains.

In the centre of the room, under the light of a skylight, on some rude planks formed into a sloping table by a pair of trestles, lay the body of a man in the first flush of strength and manhood. His age could not have exceeded twenty-six or seven. A long oval face, with straight-cut features, surmounted by a shock of light hair; a tawny moustache and spare-pointed beard of the same colour shaded the lines of the mouth, but could not rob the face of a wild, resolute look; a handsome face withal, even in the ghastly hue of death.

The man wore the rough costume of a frontiersman, not the inevitable red shirt; in this instance it was blue, in contrast with the dull fustian colour of the trousers; coat he had none, nor were the traditional boots here. His feet were bare, and the trousers were rolled half-way up to show a bullet wound through one of his legs.

The artistic horror of the picture was supplied by a rope, neatly coiled up in sailor fashion, and lying across his breast, one end in a spliced noose round the dead man's neck, the other grimly bearing witness by the finger-marks where the lynchers had tailed on. Across the coil lay a pair of powerful hands, the right one pierced by a heavy bullet.

"What is this all about?" I enquired of one of the bystanders.

"Lynched," was my neighbour's reply, "for walking off with Fordyce's sorrel mare without any invitation."

"Who lynched him?" I asked.

"Well, you see, it's kind o' hard to say, 'cause the boys had all wrapped their heads up in flour-bags not to catch cold. There's been a good many horses lately found their way to Texas, and most men that own horses had rather have the selling of them themselves. Then, you see," he added argumentatively, "when the lawyers get hold of these things you never know how they'll turn out. So perhaps this was the neatest way of doing the job."

"He wor a thoroughbred, though, 'was Si Partridge," sighed another bystander.

I came away from this place, for I had over a forty mile ride to accomplish that day, and bidding my new acquaintances good-bye, I started off; but all through that ride over that monotonous, unfrequented country, the whole scene of that morning was constantly before me with painful vividness—the brutal jests of the cowboys, the stoic indifference of the crowd.

I did not dream that I personally should be connected, in however so small a degree, with this tragical event.

On the slope of the Rockies, eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, and nearly fifty miles from the scene of the previous morning, I awoke, prepared for a ride over the ranch of my host. At the appointed hour I stood ready for the mount which had been placed at my disposal.

"You'll find her quiet enough, I guess," said the foreman, as he was straining at the girths to get the huge saddle down to the poor shrunken withers of a big raking sorrel mare with long, lean flanks and jaded lack-lustre eyes. I'm sorry I can't find you something better, but the party is a large one, and our stock is mostly out. But you'll find her quiet enough. A month ago I wouldn't have answered for her; but it'll take more nor a month now, on this mountain grass, to make her what she was before Si Partridge got across her."

"You don't mean to say this is the horse Partridge stole? the horse they lynched him for?"

"Yes, sir! that's the mare. Leastways, that's the shadder of her, and that's the saddle, too, and that's the barn he took her from. That's how I spotted him. Whoa, girl. Yes, sir; fifteen hundred miles she carried him afore he found that halter round his neck."

And this was the very sorrel mare, the animal I was about to ride! Here stood the cause! for, struggle as I would, I could not disabuse my mind that somehow or other the mare had been a responsible agent throughout—the fate—the demon that lured poor Partridge to his doom.

More to divert my thoughts from the morbid channel they were running in than from any real curiosity, for the drama to me was all in the *dénouement*, I questioned my host as we rode along as to the earlier history of the case.

It seems that Partridge had long enjoyed an evil reputation. From early days he had earned his claim to rank among the "bad lot." Already there were one or two he had marked, and had been marked by them, to "shoot down at sight." Arrested some two years before

for some little difficulty, he had been released through the intercession and noble sacrifice of a loving sister, whose devotion he rewarded shortly after by levanting with her watch and any other portable property he could lay his hands on. Since then his life was unknown to honest men. He became a wandering citizen of the frontier States and territories, turning up occasionally in his old haunts and disappearing again without apparent aim or purpose.

This mode of life necessarily gave him a very extended knowledge of the geography of the country, and how many "strays" had profited by that knowledge in their long journey into Texas is, of course, a matter of surmise.

It was on one of these visitations lately that he had claimed hospitality at the ranch of my host. He was fed and lodged there for a night—for in that country every one is welcome to this—and then took his leave. A night after, the sorrel mare disappeared; but as a saddle and bridle disappeared with her it was hardly possible to attribute the aberration to the mare's own cussedness.

The ranch lies far from the line of any trail, so it was impossible to impute the disappearance to any fortuitous attentions of a tramp; furthermore, the selection of a new saddle kept in a particular stall in one of the barns seemed to argue very consistently familiarity with the premises.

Suspicion pointed to Partridge; the hue and cry was raised, and two deputy-sheriffs at once started in pursuit.

The trail was struck about twenty miles west of the ranch where the fugitive had crossed the boundary from Wyoming into Colorado, then, turning south, had entered the mountains again by the North Park. Through the North Park winds the great cattle trail between the northern territories and Texas, winding through rugged passes under the shadow of the loftiest peak in the Rockies.

Once on this scent the chase was hotly urged, for in the gloomy solitude of these mountains further to the South, popular repute has located a "horse camp," a centre for the operations of these desperadoes, where the stolen horses are gathered until a bunch of thirty or forty warrants the journey into Texas. For miles around the charmed circle of this camp pursuit becomes impossible. In the dense pine forests at every step the way is blocked by fallen timbers, the decaying trunks of bygone giants.

Here, once the track is lost, progress for man or beast is hopeless, and the fugitive, versed in every double of the trail, can snap his fingers with impunity at his pursuers.

Partridge, it seems, however, was unable to reach this spot, the sheriffs were too close upon him, for instead of following the trail, he turned abruptly to the West and struck out for Utah, straight across half the State of Colorado.

This sudden change of plan served his turn, and it was only in Utah that the sheriffs, assisted by fresh mounts afforded them as they passed along, came up to him again. This time he turned short round and made for the North Park, a second time baffling his followers. And now once again was the same ground covered, as he tried to evade pursuit, and a second time reached Utah in safety.

Realise, as I tried to realise, whilst bestriding that poor patient beast, this mad gallop against fate, this wild chase by day, by night, through the gloomy pine woods, the frowning cañons, over the snow-clad divides, across the roaring torrents—by sunlight—by starlight, across the smiling plains, the dreary wastes of Alkali,—back and forth, and forth and back again, relentless avengers ever in the wake. One moment in some mountain gulch, the pursuing hoofs are heard ringing out clearly in the night air, approaching, approaching how quickly! the dreadful agony of that moment, until the winged feet fly past and the echoing sounds fade slowly, slowly, oh, how slowly! down into the deep mystery of the cañon, far ahead into the West. Then the crouching figure, emerging from the shadow of some great boulder, the quivering mare, the cruel lunge of the spurs as she wheels round, and horse and rider, dashing back up the ravine, are soon a speck of black against that cold streak of dawn that marks the top of the divide. Remember the distance between these points is not less than three to four hundred miles, and each time the desperado must have travelled out of his way in order to avoid any settlements or ranches along the route of his former journeys, where his exploits would necessarily have been known, and then think of the suffering of man and beast.

To the end he baffled by his cunning the sleuth-hound of the law—but Nemesis overtook him. The poor mare that had borne him so nobly was at last done—dead-beaten. He, on the last journey, traded her for a horse, and so once more established a clue to his whereabouts. It was no longer officers of the law, armed with strength of authority, he had to fly from; it was a dilettante detective now—a little ranchman, actuated by the reward offered, or by a sense of the common danger—that clung to his heels; a man with fresh nerve, fresh horse, fresh strength. And so, again, the mad ride begins.

For two days the new hunter follows the trail, and on the third,

perhaps to his own dismay, he comes in sight of his quarry. Had the arbiter, in any question of supremacy, been between him and Partridge, the little ranchman would, in all probability, have gone to the ground. But fatigue and fasting have demoralised the fugitive. He no longer pauses to raise even a pistol. Flight alone he thinks of, and from a man he could have brushed from his path. But it is all over. The sharp crack of a pistol rings out in the still air, and the bullet strikes Partridge in the wrist. Another and another, and a bullet goes crashing through Partridge's leg, and his horse falls dead under him.

One last flicker of the old fire is left the wretched man. Before his horse reaches the ground, he snatches his pistol from the holster and, steadying himself upon the horn of the big Mexican saddle, he prepares to cover his assailant. The little ranchman's position is a terrible one, for he has no more ammunition. "Hands up," he cries, with a sudden inspiration, pointing the empty pistol at Partridge. "Hands up, you ——! or I'll finish you in your tracks. The pistol drops from the bleeding, miserable man, and the long ride is done.

Bound hand and foot, he was taken back by the little ranchman to Laramie, and there locked up.

"But how," I inquired of my host, "was he lynched? You say he was locked up."

"So he was; but, you see, the boys began to think he wasn't safe in Laramie, so they prevailed on the sheriff to take him down to Red Butte, twelve miles east of Laramie. The sheriff seemed to think so too. He knows the boys (with a knowing look). So, at ten o'clock at night, Si is taken out of the lock-up, still bound hand and foot, and placed into a buggy by the side of the sheriff, who puts out at once for Red Butte. Well, they get only up to the bridge over the creek, three miles out, when six masked figures emerge from the shadow of the fence. Two of them lay hold of the team by the bridles, and the other four go up, revolver in hand, to the sheriff, mildly suggesting that it isn't safe to be driving out so late; that he'd better leave Si along with them, and drive back to Laramie just as fast as his team could carry him."

"Well?"

"Well, there's no much arguing with four revolvers when they look as if they mean business; so the sheriff hands Si over, and jogs the team back to town."

"And Si?"

"Had grip to the last. Bound hand and foot, with a bullet through his leg and one of his hands smashed, he saw at once that there wasn't a living show for him. 'Well, boys,' he said, 'I suppose

it's all over?' 'Yes,' was the cold but emphatic reply. 'Well, good bye, boys.' 'Good bye,' they answered, as they put the necktie round him and whipped him up to the cross-bar of Hutton's gate."

"And what became of the sheriff?"

"He came to town, got some more of the boys, and went back for the body."

But the bane of the sorrel mare clung even to the little ranchman. Before I left the country he was in a madhouse. The night after Partridge's death he was awakened by the sound of a man climbing up to the fan-light that surmounts every hotel door in America. Alarming the inmates, every search was made for the intruder, but in vain. The next night it was the same, with a similar result. He grew uneasy; he moved to another hotel; but in vain. Now he knew what it meant—he was marked; the avenger was on his track. He had been doomed by some of Si Partridge's gang; by night or day, no more rest for him. The horror of his situation, his impending fate, turned his brain, and before a week had elapsed since his victim's death he was mad.

I rode the mare for two miles that day, and then changed mounts with my son. Mental anguish had given place to physical agony. The poor mare changed her feet every second lift. She was so stiff and sore. So was I for days after.

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The Pipe of Peace.

BY AUSTIN BRERETON.

NOT the least curious of my adventures during a brief stay in America some few years ago was a visit to a hashish-house where, by a modest expenditure of three dollars, the initiated may seek oblivion from the trials and troubles of a world of which they are weary, thanks to the intoxicating perfume of the hemp plant. The dried leaves of this useful plant, known to the familiar in such matters as *gunjeh*, are supposed to bring unspeakable delight to the smoker, so that, having surfeited myself with all the other sights of New York, it was with joy that I hailed the prospect painted for me of Eastern luxury and delightful dreams to be had simply for the asking. I had heard of hashish smokers being blessed with visions of blue fields, and similar joys unobtainable to the ordinary mortal, and, consequently, my guide, philosopher, and friend—an accomplished and genial young lawyer—needed the exercise of very little persuasion in order to induce me to accompany him to a hashish-house which, he informed me, was frequented by the best class of citizens, and particularly by ladies who, when their husbands were on the Stock Exchange, sought this refuge from worldly affairs.

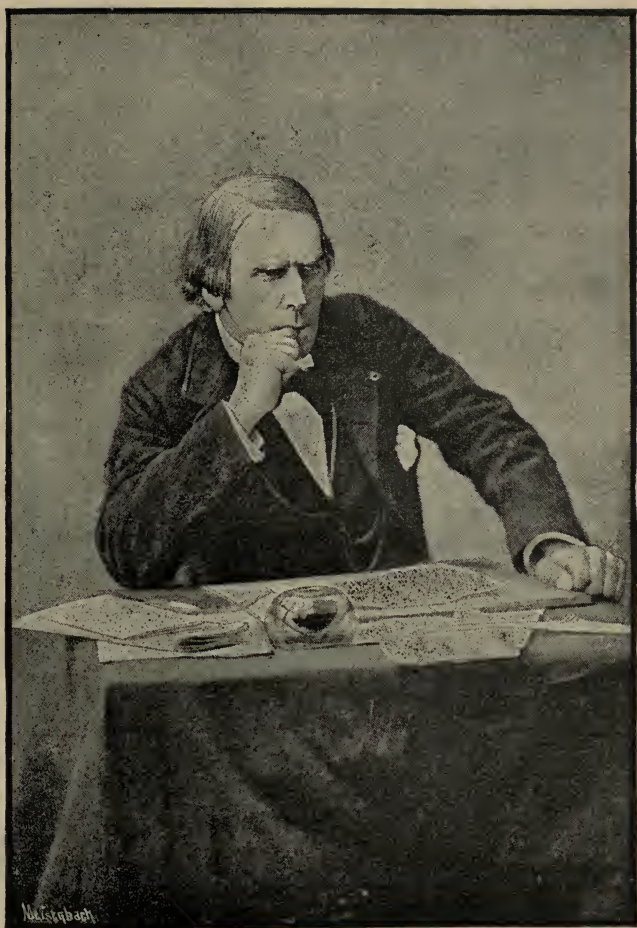
My friend could scarcely have chosen a more fitting night to introduce a stranger to the mysteries of *gunjeh*. The rain poured down unceasingly in torrents, and the east wind pierced through the thickest of overcoats. So much of our journey had to be accomplished on foot, that it was a relief when we reached the tall, gloomy house, kept by a Greek, by the way, where we were to seek solace in the pipe of peace. A thrice-repeated knock at the heavy door brought a dusky servant who, after a little questioning with my friend, gave us admittance. The outer door safely secured, the inner one was opened. What a change was there! From cold and darkness into warmth and light, the beating rain and cruel wind exchanged for a delicately-perfumed atmosphere, carpets into which the foot sank ankle-deep, curiously wrought devices on which the eye rested with a feeling of relief, delicate music from unseen instruments, all the senses pleased with harmonious surroundings, the flowers on the carpets so wonderfully wrought that you hesitated to tread upon them for fear that they were real, mirrors painted with luxurious foliage, and birds of gay plumage, and so arranged as to magnify the room and deceive

you as to its shape—in such a place did I prepare to enjoy the pipe of peace.

Behold me, then, curled up on a couch, my wet boots exchanged for list slippers, and attired in a gorgeous dressing-gown, pipe in hand, and about to smoke. In this case ignorance was certainly bliss, for, had I had any idea of what was about to ensue, nothing could have tempted me to endure the mental torture through which I passed whilst under the influence of that terrible pipe. As I smoked, the perfume of the room grew fainter and fainter, the music sounded more distantly, and in a few seconds I began to lose consciousness. All the blood in my body tingled, there came a strange humming sound into my ears, and I seemed to be sinking into the unfathomable depths of the earth. Oddly enough, I was not transported in a moment to the far East, nor did I seem to remain in New York. A place in England, afterwards familiar to me, was the scene of my dream, and persons, with some of whom I subsequently became acquainted, were the actors in it. The dream, though sometimes indistinct, and its principal events occurring only in flashes, as it were, was not at all confused, and I felt and suffered with each character as though he or she were myself.

The first picture that presented itself to my view was the gate-keeper's lodge in a large park in the neighbourhood of London. The head of the little family inhabiting it had been a soldier, and now enjoyed a small pension. He held a position of trust in the park, he lived rent free, and the dead branches from the old oak trees surrounding the lodge supplied him with sufficient fuel to keep up good fires during the long winter evenings. His wife was a type of woman fast dying out; respectful to her superiors, trusting in those placed above her, loving her neighbour as herself, and as honest as the day. She could not write, and it was only with difficulty that she could read. Yet her feelings and sentiments were as delicate as those of the most highly-bred lady in the land. This good couple had but one sorrow in life. Their only son had died in the prime of manhood, a blow severely felt, but at which they murmured not. As they had one great sorrow, so they had one supreme joy. Their only daughter was a tall, auburn-haired girl of twenty, with large, soft, wondering blue eyes. Father and mother loved their daughter with their heart and soul. To see her happily married was their only wish.

One other inhabitant of the lodge remains to be described. He was a young barrister who occupied, during the summer, the upper rooms in the lodge. As a rule, he was the personification of good spirits and animation. Possessed of a bright, handsome face, with a kind look and a good word for everyone, it was no wonder that he was generally loved. Being a little over-sensitive, he was never very



MR. E. S. WILLARD AS MARK LEZZARD IN
"HOODMAN BLIND."

communicative to his friends, although they generally extended their confidence to him. It was noticed by those who knew him well that a change had come over him of late. He was not so bright as usual, and at times a momentary look, half of sadness, half of despair, would steal across his face. As he did not volunteer to disclose the secret of this change in his nature, no one questioned him on the subject, and he nursed his sorrow in silence. For he had a sorrow which, unwisely, he never attempted to triumph over. His story was an old one. He had fallen in love with a beautiful girl whom it was impossible for him to marry. She loved him, and told him so; but marriage was out of the question. She was the daughter of a peer, he a struggling barrister, with nothing to help him on in the world but his own wits. For a time, Edward Goring felt heart-broken and distracted. Before long, however, he grew calmer, and made a weak effort to lose himself in study. A friend told him of the rooms at the lodge—the very place for work, as the road outside the lodge was a private one, and the gate was seldom opened. Here he pretended to bury himself in his books, but he thought more of his lost love than the law.

As he sat dreaming over his unread volumes one summer afternoon a wild scheme came into his head. Mary Lessington, the keeper's daughter, was pretty at all times, but as she stooped to the table close to Edward Goring, the glow of the setting sun gave a wonderful charm to her strange, trusting face. In an instant Goring had reached towards her and kissed her. The girl gave a startled cry, and tried to escape from him. But he held her close, and poured into her ear words of burning love, which he knew to be a lie. She, poor thing, fascinated by his handsome face and winning ways, and overcome by a will stronger than her own, believed and trusted. His fair words opened out a new life to her. She had previously cherished a secret affection for him; now she gave him all her love. In her blind faith for him she forgot father and mother. In a few days the happiness of a home was destroyed, the light of two lives had been taken away. The girl fled with her lover, not daring to leave any word as to her flight.

This, then, was the picture which presented itself so vividly to me in the dream: An old man standing erect, his arms upraised to Heaven, as he called on God to curse the destroyer of his happiness; while an old woman, his wife, besought him to desist and to pray for the forgiveness of their erring one. Then, months seemed to have elapsed, and one winter's night the old woman sat alone in the cottage, for her husband had gone to his rest, and with her dim eyes she stared into the fire, murmuring always, "When will she come home? when will she come home?" And then, as the lamp burnt

low, and the log on the fire turned into a heavy, dull ash, I saw at the window the pale face of a woman, with eyes still blue, but full of unutterable sorrow; I heard a low cry of "Mother!" and saw two women sobbing on each other's shoulder.

Another pause seemed to come in my dream, and it was again winter. The snow had been falling fast for two days. It clung to the tall trees in the park, and it covered the lodge with a white mantle. It had been driven by the wind up the wide path, and it lay in a heap some two or three feet high against the great iron gate. It was the eve of the New Year. Mother and daughter, now inseparable companions, sat together in the cottage. The shadow had not been lifted from them, but they were happy in each other's love, and the terrible sadness of the girl's face had given place to a sweet expression of resignation. She could never love again as she had loved, yet she felt that she might be happier if one whose name was never mentioned in the lonely lodge were only dead. Whilst *he* lived, she felt that he still had a claim upon her.

Little did she know how near at hand was her release. Edward Goring had risen in his profession; he had rapidly acquired a name, and was in a fair way to make a great position in the world when he was struck down by a severe illness. As he lay on his sick bed, the great sin of his life presented itself to him in all its depth. He truly repented, and determined that he would go to the woman he had injured and ask her forgiveness as soon as ever he was better. He rallied, and, against the wishes of those around him, insisted upon making the journey on this bitterly cold New Year's Eve. Arrived by train near his destination, he had to make part of his journey on foot, along the private road outside the park. Exhausted by the walk and chilled by the cold, he reached the iron gate of the park, but, too weak even to raise his voice for help, he fell back in the snow, and was quickly covered by the drift.

Early the following morning, a carriage, belonging to the owners of Claremont, a great house near the park, was driven down the private road. The gate, through which the carriage had to pass, was opened by Mary Lessington, who stood for a moment horror-struck, as she saw the body of a man lying in the snow, and then fell with a wild shriek as a gust of wind blew the snow from off the face of her dead lover. The occupant of the carriage, startled at such an unusual occurrence, alighted and rushed to the spot. She, too, gazed with horror on the face of the dead man, for she was his first love, and, Mary Lessington rising, the two women, separated from each other by the dead body of the man they had both loved, stood face to face for the first time.

This was the last picture which presented itself to me in my

reverie, for, with a start, I awoke, and hastily changing the trappings of the hashish-house for my own garments, was glad to make my way as speedily as possible into the wet streets.

* * * * *

Shortly after my return to England, I was wandering through a park in the twilight of a summer evening when I came to a lodge the very same as that which I had seen in my dream in New York. I shuddered as I thought of the story connected with it, and was about to turn away when Mary Lessington appeared at the door. She was as I had first seen her; young, with blue eyes full of gladness, no trace of sorrow in that innocent face. My dream-child was a reality, and still—thank God!—the pride of both father and mother. For I saw both her parents, the one slightly bent with age, but hale and hearty, the other with a bright, sunny smile and hopeful countenance. So charmed was I with this happy trio that I arranged to stay at the lodge for a few weeks, and seldom have I spent so pleasant a time, for kinder people than ex-Sergeant Lessington and his wife and their daughter, Mary, I have never met.

As I write this chill November night, I recall a scene I know so well. Around the blazing wood fire in the old lodge there sits a group of contented people, no shadow of shame amongst them. Three of the characters we know. There are two others who were not in my dream. One is a thriving young farmer, who is about to make pretty, blue-eyed Mary his wife. The other, blue-eyed also, but with fair hair, is Mary's brother, a handsome and spirited youth. No sorrow has yet crossed the threshold of this happy home. May the day be far distant ere it does!



“Will Frank Buchanan Write?”

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

PROLOGUE.

Extract from a letter received on October 2, 1885, from a sympathetic friend:—

“I clip the Death at foot of this page from this week’s *Stage*. Is it not a condensed three-volume romance? Do not think it a liberty, but I feel sure this will afford you an idea for another poem.”

DEATHS.

On the 18th instant, at — Street, Leicester, Reginald Frank, the only beloved child of Laura Buchanan; age 1 two years and seven months. *Will Frank Buchanan write?*

[This advertisement is a true one save for the substituted names.—C.S.]

ACT I.

A MAIDEN, blest with loving eyes,
And soul concealed from sin;
A man, who boldly dares and dies,
Weak woman-kind to win.
A girl, heart sick of dreary days,
Whose thoughts to distance swim;
He, with her fair hair idly plays,
She, blindly worships him.

They met, as other lovers meet,
Beneath life’s Calvary!
He would fling flowers at her feet,
Without him she would die.
No terror creeps to him, alas!
On her no shadows fall.
A gayer sunlight gilds the grass,
When Love is Lord of all.

He thought of her, as something dear
To cherish and possess,
Her sigh was music in his ear,
His triumph—her caress!
Well! he was lord if she were weak,
He failed where she was strong;
Men are but madmen do they seek
A Hymn from out Love’s song!

She thought of him as half divine,
A monarch who had come,
Upon her lonely life to shine,
And lead her proudly home.
She paced her chamber, to and fro,
Her praying face was white,
God ! send the answer, yes or no,
Will Frank Buchanan write ?

ACT II.

A weary woman with a soul
To ruin or to save !
He was the rock where breakers roll,
She was the storm-tost wave !
The hair with which he used to play,
The lips he loved to taste,
Are nothing ! Night has followed day,
Wealth yielded all to waste.

She was a gambler at the game !
Staked honour at the throw,
Flung down her reputation ! name !
He smiled that it was so.
For him she sacrificed her all,
And, helpless to resist,
Like some poor bird, did he but call,
She settled on his wrist.

He left her broken, flung aside,
A more than ruined life,
A woman who was never bride,
But more in soul than wife !
He took her up his taste to please,
The coward dared depart
When she was praying on her knees
For his accursed heart !

One night she faced her misery
With resolution grim ;
He dared to hope that she would die,
She bravely prayed for him :
“ God ! sometimes pitiless to men,
“ Read my torn soul aright !
“ If I be patient, Lord ! oh then
“ Will Frank Buchanan write ? ”

ACT III.

A mother with a weary face,
 An infant at her breast,
 Behind her—unabsolved disgrace,
 Before—eternal rest!
 Alone? No, this sweet part of him
 Must on her bosom lie.
 And still the star-crowned Cherubim
 Sing of eternity!

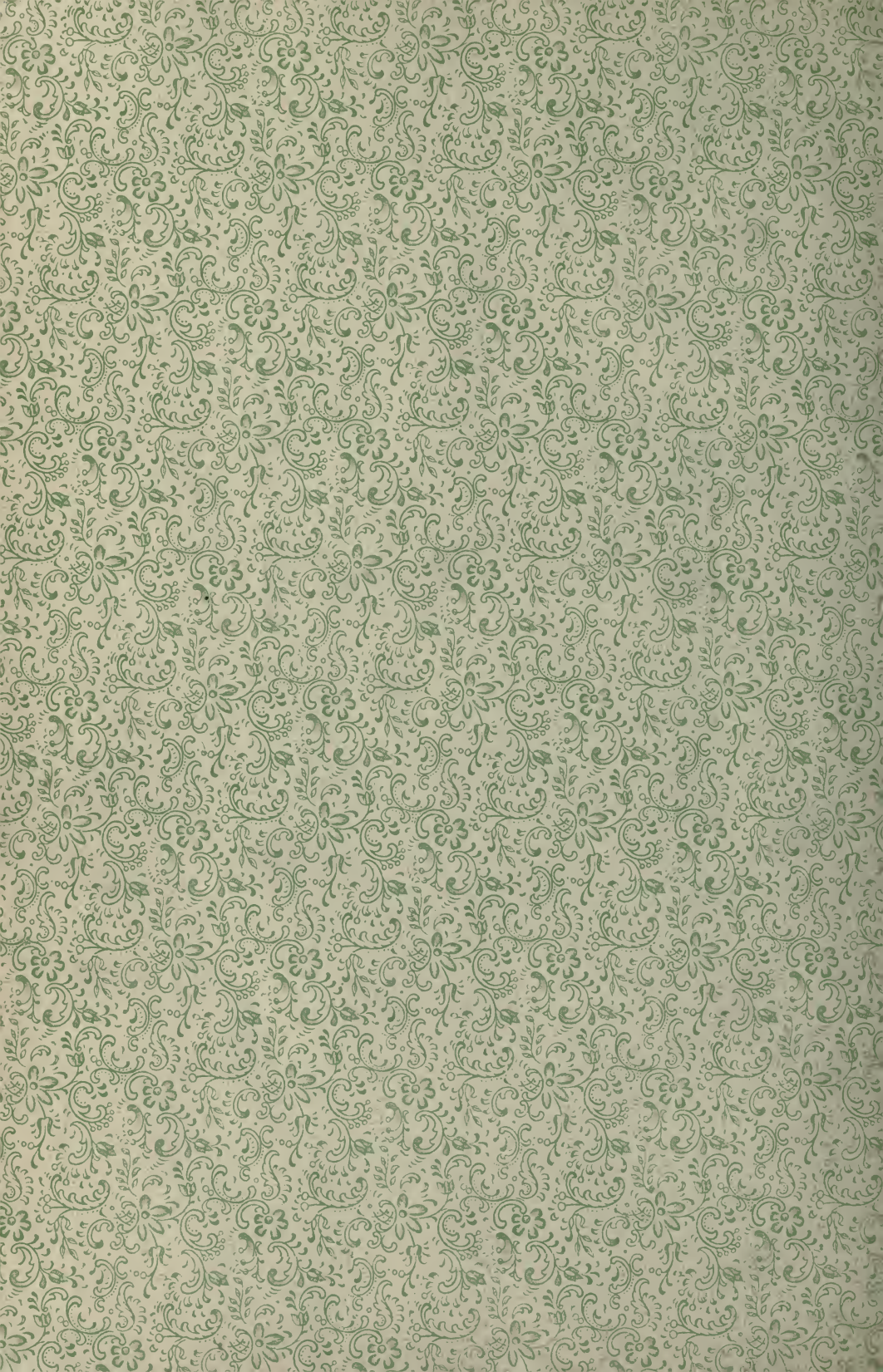
She creeps in silence to the place
 So long shut out from sight;
 In agony she bows her face
 Before the altar light:
 "Sweet Heart of Jesus! Heart of Rest!
 "Pure Mary! Mother mild!
 "Behold the wounds upon *my* breast;
 "Hear me—but save my child!"

Is there no music in the air
 To lift such prayers above,
 Where reigns the best of what was fair
 In Everlasting Love?
 Was there no mercy on that day
 To raise that lowly head?
 She from God's altar crept away,
 To find—her child was dead!

There lay the blossom that was torn
 From the cold grasp of earth,
 Waiting an everlasting morn
 And a transcendent birth!
 But the pale woman bowed her head,
 Still praying; and that night
 Kissed *their* dead child; and, sobbing, said,
 "*Will Frank Buchanan write?*"

CLEMENT SCOTT.

November 10, 1885.



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The Theatre annual

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